





















*Poetical Works of*  
ROBERT BRIDGES

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*Poetical Works of*  
ROBERT BRIDGES

*with*  
*The Testament of Beauty*  
*but excluding the*  
*eight dramas*



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ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES

Born, Walmer, 23 October 1844

Died, Chilswell, 21 April 1930

*The second edition of the Poetical Works of Robert Bridges (excluding the dramas) was first included in the Oxford Standard Authors series in 1936 and reprinted in 1942, 1944, and 1947. Reissued in 1953 with The Testament of Beauty added and reprinted in 1959.*

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## *Note to Second Edition*

THE first edition of this book consisted of the Poems and Masks (as apart from the Dramas) contained in the collected editions of the Poetical Works of Robert Bridges, together with two groups of Later Poems, and Poems in Classical Prosody which were then published or collected for the first time.

To these are now added another piece in Classical Prosody, reprints of two later volumes of verse (*October and other Poems* and *New Verse*), and two pieces hitherto not included in any collection.

A record of the previous publication of the poems will be found in the bibliographical notes prefixed to the various sections of the present book.

The spelling of certain words is not uniform throughout the poems. This is due to observance of the text of the earlier editions of different dates, in the notes to which the author's justification of these peculiarities was given.



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# PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

## *A Mask in the Greek Manner*



### PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *Private Press of H. Daniel.* Oxford, 1883.
2. *Chiswick Press.* G. Bell & Sons, 1884.
3. *Clarendon Press.* Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. I, 1898.

## ARGUMENT

*Prometheus coming on earth to give fire to men appears before the palace of Inachus in Argos on a festival of Zeus. He interrupts the ceremony by announcing fire and persuades Inachus to dare the anger of Zeus and accept the gift. Inachus fetching Argeia his wife from the palace has in turn to quiet her fears. He asks a prophecy of Prometheus who foretells the fate of Io their daughter. Prometheus then setting flame to the altar and writing his own name thereon in the place of Zeus disappears.*

*The Chorus sing (1) a Hymn to Zeus with the stories of the birth of Zeus and the marriage of Hera with the dances of the Curetes and the Hesperides, (2) their anticipation of fire with an Ode on Wonder, (3) a Tragic Hymn on the lot of man, (4) a Fire-chorus, (5) a final Chorus in praise of Prometheus.*

*All the characters are good. Prometheus prologizes. He carries a long reed.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*PROMETHEUS.*

*INACHUS.*

*ARGEIA.*

*SERVANT.*

*IO (persona muta).*

*CHORUS: Youths and maidens of the house of  
Inachus.*

*The SCENE is in ARGOS before the palace of Inachus.  
An altar inscribed to Zeus is at the  
centre of the stage.*

# PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

## *PROMETHEUS.*

FROM high Olympus and the ætherial courts,  
Where mighty Zeus our angry king confirms  
The Fates' decrees and bends the wills of the gods,  
I come : and on the earth step with glad foot.

This variegated ocean-floor of the air,  
The changeful circle of fair land, that lies  
Heaven's dial, sisterly mirror of night and day :  
The wide o'er-wandered plain, this nether world  
My truant haunt is, when from jealous eyes  
I steal, for hither 'tis I steal, and here  
Unseen repair my joy : yet not unseen  
Methinks, nor seen unguessed of him I seek.  
Rather by swath or furrow, or where the path  
Is walled with corn I am found, by trellised vine  
Or olive set in banks or orchard trim :  
I watch all toil and tilth, farm, field and fold,  
And taste the mortal joy ; since not in heaven  
Among our easeful gods hath facile time  
A touch so keen, to wake such love of life  
As stirs the frail and careful being, who here,  
The king of sorrows, melancholy man,  
Bows at his labour, but in heart erect  
A god stands, nor for any gift of god  
Would barter his immortal-hearted prime.

Could I but win this world from Zeus for mine,  
With not a god to vex my happy rule,  
I would inhabit here and leave high heaven :  
So much I love it and its race of men,



## Prometheus

Even as he hates them, hates both them, and me  
For loving what he hates, and would destroy me, 30  
Outcast in the scorn of all his cringing crew,  
For daring but to save what he would slay :  
And me must first destroy. Thus he denieth  
My heart's wish, thus my counsel sets at naught,  
Which him saved once, when all at stake he stood  
Uprisen in rebellion to overthrow  
The elderseated Titans, for I that day  
Gave him the counsels which his foes despised.  
Unhappy they, who had still their blissful seats  
Preserved and their Olympian majesty, 40  
Had they been one with me. Alas, my kin !

But he, when he had taken the throne and chained  
His foes in wasteful Tartarus, said no more  
Where is Prometheus our wise counsellor ?  
What saith Prometheus ? tell us, O Prometheus,  
What Fate requires ! but waxing confident  
And wanton, as a youth first tasting power,  
He wrecked the timeless monuments of heaven,  
The witness of the wisdom of the gods,  
And making all about him new, beyond 50  
Determined to destroy the race of men,  
And that create afresh or else have none.

Then his vain mind imagined a device,  
And at his bidding all the opposèd winds  
Blew, and the scattered clouds and furlèd snows,  
From every part of heaven together flying,  
He with brute hands in huge disorder heaped :  
They with the winds' weight and his angry breath  
Were thawed : in cataracts they fell, and earth  
In darkness deep and whelmèd tempest lay, 60  
Drowned 'neath the waters. Yet on the mountain-tops  
Some few escaped, and some, thus warned by me,  
Made shift to live in vessels which outrode  
The season and the fury of the flood.

## *The Firegiver*

And when his rain was spent and from clear skies  
Zeus looking down upon the watery world,  
Beheld these few, the remnant of mankind,  
Who yet stood up and breathed ; he next withdrew  
The seeds of fire, that else had still lain hid  
In withered branch and the blue flakes of flint  
For man to exact and use, but these withdrawn,  
Man with the brutes degraded would be man  
No more ; and so the tyrant was content.

70

But I, despised again, again upheld  
The weak, and pitying them sent sweet Hope,  
Bearer of dreams, enchantress fond and kind,  
From heaven descending on the unhindered rays  
Of every star, to cheer with visions fair  
Their unamending pains. And now this day  
Behold I come bearing the seal of all  
Which Hope had promised : for within this reed  
A prisoner I bring them stolen from heaven,  
The flash of mastering fire, and it have borne  
So swift to earth, that when yon noontide sun  
Rose from the sea at morning I was by,  
And unperceived of Hêlios plunged the point  
I' the burning axle, and withdrew a tongue  
Of breathing flame, which lives to leap on earth  
For man the father of all fire to come.

80

And hither have I brought it even to Argos  
Unto king Inachus, him having chosen  
Above all mortals to receive my gift :  
For he is hopeful, careful, wise, and brave.

90

He first, when first the floods left bare the land,  
Grew warm with enterprise, and gathered men  
Together, and disposed their various tasks  
For common weal combined ; for soon were seen  
The long straight channels dwindling on the plain,  
Which slow from stagnant pool and wide morass  
The pestilent waters to the rivers bore :

100

## Prometheus

Then in the ruined dwellings and old tombs  
He dug, unbedding from the wormèd ooze  
Vessels and tools of trade and husbandry;  
Wherewith, all seasonable works restored,  
Oil made he and wine anew, and taught mankind  
To live not brutally though without fire,  
Tending their flocks and herds and weaving wool,  
Living on fruit and milk and shepherds' fare,  
Till time should bring back flame to smithy and hearth,  
Or Zeus relent. Now at these gates I stand, 110  
At this mid hour, when Inachus comes forth  
To offer sacrifice unto his foe.  
For never hath his faithful zeal forborne  
To pay the power, though hard, that rules the world  
The smokeless sacrifice; which first to-day  
Shall smoke, and rise at heaven in flame to brave  
The baffled god. See here a servant bears  
For the cold altar ceremonial wood:  
My shepherd's cloak will serve me for disguise.

### SERVANT.

With much toil have I hewn these sapless logs. 120

PR. But toil brings health, and health is happiness.

SERV. Here's one I know not—nay, how came he here  
Unseen by me? I pray thee, stranger, tell me  
What wouldst thou at the house of Inachus?

PR. Intruders, friend, and travellers have glib tongues,  
Silence will question such.

SERV. If 'tis a message,  
To-day is not thy day—who sent thee hither?

PR. The business of my leisure was well guessed:  
But he that sent me hither is I that come.

SERV. I smell the matter—thou wouldst serve the house?

PR. 'Twas for that very cause I fled my own. 131

SERV. From cruelty or fear of punishment?

PR. Cruel was my master, for he slew his father.

## *The Firegiver*

His punishments thou speakest of are crimes.

SERV. Thou dost well flying one that slew his father.

PR. Thy lord, they say, is kind.

SERV. Well, thou wilt see.

Thou may'st at once begin—come, give a hand.

PR. A day of freedom is a day of pleasure :

And what thou doest have I never done,

And understanding not might mar thy work.

140

SERV. Ay true—there is a right way and a wrong  
In laying wood.

PR. Then let me see thee lay it :

The sight of a skill'd hand will teach an art.

SERV. Thou seest this faggot which I now unbind,  
How it is packed within.

PR. I see the cones

And needles of the fir, which by the wind

In melancholy places ceaselessly

Sighing are strewn upon the tufted floor.

SERV. These took I from a sheltered bank, whereon

The sun looks down at noon ; for there is need

150

The things be dry. These first I spread ; and then  
Small sticks that snap i' the hand.

PR. Such are enough

To burden the slow flight of labouring rooks,

When on the leafless tree-tops in young March

Their glossy herds assembling soothe the air

With cries of solemn joy and cawings loud.

And such the long-necked herons will bear to mend

Their airy platform, when the loving spring

Bids them take thought for their expected young.

SERV. See even so I cross them and cross them so : 160

Larger and by degrees a steady stack

Have built, whereon the heaviest logs may lie :

And all of sun-dried wood : and now 'tis done.

PR. And now 'tis done, what means it now 'tis done?

SERV. Well, thus 'tis rightly done : but why 'tis so

## Prometheus

I cannot tell, nor any man here knows ;  
Save that our master when he sacrificeth,  
As thou wilt hear anon, speaketh of fire ;  
And fire he saith is good for gods and men ;  
And the gods have it and men have it not : 170  
And then he prays the gods to send us fire ;  
And we, against they send it, must have wood  
Laid ready thus as I have shewn thee here.

PR. To-day he sacrificeth ?

SERV. Ay, this noon.

Hark ! hear'st thou not ? they come. The solemn flutes  
Warn us away ; we must not here be seen  
In these our soiled habits, yet may stand  
Where we may hear and see and not be seen.

[*Exeunt R.*

*Enter CHORUS, and from the palace INACHUS bearing cakes : he comes to stand behind the altar.*

### CHORUS.

God of Heaven !  
We praise thee, Zeus most high, 180  
To whom by eternal Fate was given  
The range and rule of the sky ;  
When thy lot, first of three  
Leapt out, as sages tell,  
And won Olympus for thee,  
Therein for ever to dwell :  
But the next with the barren sea  
To grave Poseidôn fell,  
And left fierce Hades his doom, to be  
The lord and terror of hell. 190

(2) Thou sittest for aye  
Encircled in azure bright,  
Regarding the path of the sun by day,  
And the changeful moon by night :

## *The Firegiver*

Attending with tireless ears  
To the song of adoring love,  
With which the separate spheres  
Are voiced that turn above :  
And all that is hidden under  
The clouds thy footing has furl'd 200  
Fears the hand that holdeth the thunder,  
The eye that looks on the world.

### *Semichorus of youths.*

Of all the isles of the sea  
Is Crete most famed in story :  
Above all mountains famous to me  
Is Ida and crowned with glory.  
There guarded of Heaven and Earth  
Came Rhea at fall of night  
To hide a wondrous birth  
From the Sire's unfathering sight. 210  
The halls of Cronos rang  
With omens of coming ill,  
And the mad Curêtes danced and sang  
Adown the slopes of the hill.

Then all the peaks of Gnosus kindled red  
Beckoning afar unto the sinking sun,  
He thro' the vaporous west plunged to his bed,  
Sunk, and the day was done.  
But they, though he was fled,  
Such light still held, as oft 220  
Hanging in air aloft,  
At eve from shadowed ship  
The Egyptian sailor sees :  
Or like the twofold tip  
That o'er the topmost trees  
Flares on Parnassus, and the Theban dames  
Quake at the ghostly flames.

## Prometheus

Then friendly night arose  
To succour Earth, and spread  
Her mantle o'er the snows 230  
And quenched their rosy red ;  
But in the east upsprings  
Another light on them,  
Seléné with white wings  
And hueless diadem.  
Little could she befriend  
Her father's house and state,  
Nor her weak beams defend  
Hypérion from his fate.  
Only where'er she shines, 240  
In terror looking forth,  
She sees the wailing pines  
Stoop to the bitter North :  
Or searching twice or thrice  
Along the rocky walls,  
She marks the columned ice  
Of frozen waterfalls :  
But still the darkened cave  
Grew darker as she shone,  
Wherein was Rhea gone 250  
Her child to bear and save.

[ *They dance.*

Then danced the Dactyls and Curêtes wild,  
And drowned with yells the cries of mother and child ;  
Big-armed Damnameneus gan prance and shout :  
And burly Acmon struck the echoes out :  
And Kermis leaped and howled : and Titias pranced  
And broad Cyllenus tore the air and danced :  
While deep within the shadowed cave at rest  
Lay Rhea, with her babe upon her breast.

# *The Firegiver*

## *INACHUS.*

If any here there be whose impure hands 260  
Among pure hands, or guilty heart among  
Our guiltless hearts be stained with blood or wrong,  
Let him depart !

If there be any here in whom high Zeus  
Seeing impiety might turn away,  
Now from our sacrifice and from his sin  
Let him depart !

*Semichorus of maidens.*

I have chosen to praise  
Hêra the wife, and bring  
A hymn for the feast on marriage days 270  
To the wife of the gods' king.  
How on her festival  
The gods had loving strife,  
Which should give of them all  
The fairest gift to the wife.  
But Earth said, Fair to see  
Is mine and yields to none,  
I have grown for her joy a sacred tree,  
With apples of gold thereon.

Then Hêra, when she heard what Earth had given, 280  
Smiled for her joy, and longed and came to see :  
On doveswings flying from the height of heaven,  
Down to the golden tree :  
As tired birds at even  
Come flying straight to house  
On their accustomed boughs.  
'Twas where, on tortured hands  
Bearing the mighty pole.  
Devoted Atlas stands :  
And round his bowed head roll 290



## Prometheus

Day-light and night, and stars unmingled dance,  
Nor can he raise his glance.

She saw the rocky coast  
Whereon the azured waves  
Are laced in foam, or lost  
In water-lighted caves ;  
The olive island where,  
Amid the purple seas,  
Night unto Darkness bare  
The four Hesperides : 300  
And came into the shade  
Of Atlas, where she found  
The garden Earth had made  
And fenced with groves around.  
And in the midst it grew  
Alone, the priceless stem,  
As careful, clear and true  
As graving on a gem.  
Nature had kissed Art  
And borne a child to stir 310  
With jealousy the heart  
Of heaven's Artificer.  
From crown to swelling root  
It mocked the goddess' praise,  
The green enamelled sprays,  
The emblazoned golden fruit.

[*They dance*

And 'neath the tree, with hair and zone unbound,  
The fair Hesperides aye danced around,  
And Ægle danced and sang 'O welcome, Queen !'  
And Erytheia sang 'The tree is green !' 320  
And Hestia danced and sang 'The fruit is gold !'  
And Arethusa sang 'Fair Queen, behold !'  
And all joined hands and danced about the tree,  
And sang 'O Queen, we dance and sing for thee !'

## *The Firegiver*

IN. If there be any here who has complaint  
Against our rule or claim or supplication,  
Now in the name of Zeus let it appear,  
Now let him speak !

*Prometheus re-enters.*

PR. All hail, most worthy king, such claim have I.

IN. May grace be with thee, stranger ; speak thy mind.

PR. To Argos, king of Argos, at thy house 331  
I bring long journeying to an end this hour,  
Bearing no idle message for thine ears.  
For know that far thy fame has reached, and men  
That ne'er have seen thee tell that thou art set  
Upon the throne of virtue, that goodwill  
And love thy servants are, that in thy land  
Joy, honour, trust and modesty abide  
And drink the air of peace, that kings must see  
Thy city, would they know their peoples' good 340  
And stablish them therein by wholesome laws.  
But one thing mars the tale, for o'er thy lands  
Travelling I have not seen from morn till eve,  
Either from house or farm or labourer's cot,  
In any village, nor this town of Argos  
A blue-wreathed smoke arise : the hearths are cold,  
This altar cold : I see the wood and cakes  
Unbaken—O king, where is the fire ?

IN. If hither, stranger, thou wert come to find  
That which thou findest wanting, join with us 350  
Now in our sacrifice, take food within,  
And having learnt our simple way of life  
Return unto thy country whence thou camest.  
But hast thou skill or knowledge of this thing,  
How best it may be sought, or by what means  
Hope to be reached, O speak ! I wait to hear.

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day.

IN. On earth there is fire thou sayest !

PR.

There is fire.

## Prometheus

IN. On earth this day !

PR. There is fire on earth this day.

IN. This is a sacred place, a solemn hour, 360  
Thy speech is earnest : yet even if thou speak truth,  
O welcome messenger of happy tidings,  
And though I hear aright, yet to believe  
Is hard : thou canst not know what words thou speakest  
Into what ears : they never heard before  
This sound but in old tales of happier times,  
In sighs of prayer and faint unhearsed hope :  
Maybe they heard not rightly, speak again !

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day.

IN. Yes, yes, again. Now let sweet Music blab 370  
Her secret and give o'er ; here is a trumpet  
That mocks her method. Yet 'tis but the word.  
Maybe thy fire is not the fire I seek ;  
Maybe though thou didst see it, now 'tis quenched,  
Or guarded out of reach : speak yet again  
And swear by heaven's truth is there fire or no ;  
And if there be, what means may make it mine.

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day :  
But not as thou dost seek it to be found.

IN. How seeking wrongly shall I seek aright ? 380

PR. Thou prayest here to Zeus, and him thou callest  
Almighty, knowing he could grant thy prayer :  
That if 'twere but his will, the journeying sun  
Might drop a spark into thine outstretched hand :  
That at his breath the splashing mountain brooks  
That fall from Orneæ, and cold Lernè's pool  
Would change their element, and their chill streams  
Bend in their burning banks a molten flood :  
That at his word so many messengers  
Would bring thee fire from heaven, that not a hearth 390  
In all thy land but straight would have a god  
To kneel and fan the flame : and yet to him,  
It is to him thou prayest.

## *The Firegiver*

IN. Therefore to him.

PR. Is this thy wisdom, king, to sow thy seed  
Year after year in this unsprouting soil?  
Hast thou not proved and found the will of Zeus  
A barren rock for man with prayer to plough?

IN. His anger be averted! we judge not god  
Evil, because our wishes please him not.  
Oft our shortsighted prayers to heaven ascending 400  
Ask there our ruin, and are then denied  
In kindness above granting: were't not so,  
Scarce could we pray for fear to pluck our doom  
Out of the merciful withholding hands.

PR. Why then provokest thou such great goodwill  
In long denial and kind silence shown?

IN. Fie, fie! Thou lackest piety: the god's denial  
Being nought but kindness, there is hope that he  
Will make that good which is not:—or if indeed  
Good be withheld in punishment, 'tis well 410  
Still to seek on and pray that god relent.

PR. O Sire of Argos, Zeus will not relent.

IN. Yet fire thou say'st is on the earth this day.

PR. Not of his knowledge nor his gift, O king.

IN. By kindness of what god then has man fire?

PR. I say but on the earth unknown to Zeus.

IN. How boastest thou to know, not of his knowledge?

PR. I boast not: he that knoweth not may boast.

IN. Thy daring words bewilder sense with sound.

PR. I thought to find thee ripe for daring deeds. 420

IN. And what the deed for which I prove unripe?

PR. To take of heaven's fire.

IN. And were I ripe,  
What should I dare, beseech you?

PR. The wrath of Zeus.

IN. Madman, pretending in one hand to hold  
The wrath of god and in the other fire.

PR. Thou meanest rather holding both in one.

## *Prometheus*

IN. Both impious art thou and incredible.

PR. Yet impious only till thou dost believe.

IN. And what believe? Ah, if I could believe!

It was but now thou saidst that there was fire, 430  
And I was near believing; I believed:  
Now to believe were to be mad as thou.

CHORUS. He may be mad and yet say true—maybe  
The heat of prophecy like a strong wine  
Shameth his reason with exultant speech.

PR. Thou say'st I am mad, and of my sober words  
Hast called those impious which thou fearest true,  
Those which thou knowest good, incredible.  
Consider ere thou judge: be first assured  
All is not good for man that seems god's will. 440  
See, on thy farming skill, thy country toil  
Which bends to aid the willing fruits of earth,  
And would promote the seasonable year,  
The face of nature is not always kind:  
And if thou search the sum of visible being  
To find thy blessing featured, 'tis not there:  
Her best gifts cannot brim the golden cup  
Of expectation which thine eager arms  
Lift to her mouthèd horn—what then is this  
Whose wide capacity outbids the scale 450  
Of prodigal beauty, so that the seeing eye  
And hearing ear, retiring unamazed  
Within their quiet chambers, sit to feast  
With dear imagination, nor look forth  
As once they did upon the varying air?  
Whence is the fathering of this desire  
Which mocks at fated circumstance? nay though  
Obstruction lie as cumbrous as the mountains,  
Nor thy particular hap hath armed desire  
Against the brunt of evil,—yet not for this 460  
Faints man's desire: it is the unquenchable  
Original cause, the immortal breath of being:

## *The Firegiver*

Nor is there any spirit on Earth astir,  
Nor 'neath the airy vault, nor yet beyond  
In any dweller in far-reaching space,  
Nobler or dearer than the spirit of man :  
That spirit which lives in each and will not die,  
That wooeth beauty, and for all good things  
Urgeth a voice, or in still passion sigheth,  
And where he loveth draweth the heart with him. 470  
Hast thou not heard him speaking oft and oft,  
Prompting thy secret musings and now shooting  
His feathered fancies, or in cloudy sleep  
Piling his painted dreams? O hark to him !  
For else if folly shut his joyous strength  
To mope in her dark prison without praise,  
The hidden tears with which he wails his wrong  
Will sour the fount of life. O hark to him !  
Him may'st thou trust beyond the things thou seest.  
For many things there be upon this earth 480  
Unblest and fallen from beauty, to mislead  
Man's mind, and in a shadow justify  
The evil thoughts and deeds that work his ill ;  
Fear, hatred, lust and strife, which, if man question  
The heavenborn spirit within him, are not there.  
Yet are they bold of face, and Zeus himself,  
Seeing that Mischief held her head on high,  
Lest she should go beyond his power to quell  
And draw the inevitable Fate that waits  
On utmost ill, himself preventing Fate 490  
Hasted to drown the world, and now would crush  
Thy little remnant : but among the gods  
Is one whose love and courage stir for thee ;  
Who being of manlike spirit, by many shifts  
Has stayed the hand of the enemy, who crieth  
Thy world is not destroyed, thy good shall live :  
Thou hast more power for good than Zeus for ill,  
More courage, justice, more abundant art,

## Prometheus

More love, more joy, more reason : though around thee  
Rank-rooting evil bloom with poisonous crown, 500  
Though wan and dolorous and crooked things  
Have made their home with thee, thy good shall live.  
Know thy desire : and know that if thou seek it,  
And seek, and seek, and fear not, thou shalt find.

SEM. (*youths*). Is this a god that speaketh thus ?

SEM. (*maidens*). He speaketh as a man  
In love or great affliction yields his soul.

IN. Thou, whencesoe'er thou comest, whoe'er thou art,  
Who breakest on our solemn sacrifice  
With solemn words, I pray thee not depart 510  
Till thou hast told me more. This fire I seek  
Not for myself, whose thin and silvery hair  
Tells that my toilsome age nears to its end,  
But for my children and the aftertime,  
For great the need thereof, wretched our state ;  
Nay, set by what has been, our happiness  
Is very want, so that what now is not  
Is but the measure of what yet may be.  
And first are barest needs, which well I know  
Fire would supply, but I have hope beyond, 520  
That Nature in recovering her right  
Would kinder prove to man who seeks to learn  
Her secrets and unfold the cause of life.  
So tell me, if thou knowest, what is fire ?  
Doth earth contain it ? or, since from the sun  
Fire reaches us, since in the glimmering stars  
And pallid moon, in lightning, and the glance  
Of tracking meteors that at nightfall show  
How in the air a thousand sightless things  
Travel, and ever on their windswift course 530  
Flame when they list and into darkness go,—  
Since in all these a fiery nature dwells,  
Is fire an airy essence, a thing of heaven,  
That could we poise it, were an alien power

## *The Firegiver*

To make our wisdom less, our wonder more?

PR. Thy wish to know is good, and happy is he  
Who thus from chance and change has launched his mind  
To dwell for ever with undisturbèd truth.  
This high ambition doth not prompt his hand  
To crime, his right and pleasure are not wronged 540  
By folly of his fellows, nor his eye  
Dimmed by the griefs that move the tears of men.  
Son of the earth, and citizen may be  
Of Argos or of Athens and her laws,  
But still the eternal nature, where he looks,  
O'errules him with the laws which laws obey,  
And in her heavenly city enrolls his heart.

IN. Thus ever have I held of happiness,  
The child of heavenly truth, and thus have found it  
In prayer and meditation and still thought, 550  
And thus my peace of mind based on a floor  
That doth not quaver like the joys of sense :  
Those I possess enough in seeing my slaves  
And citizens enjoy, having myself  
Tasted for once and put their sweets away.  
But of that heavenly city, of which thou sayest  
Her laws o'errule us, have I little learnt,  
For when my wandering spirit hath dared alone  
The unearthly terror of her voiceless halls,  
She hath fallen from delight, and without guide 560  
Turned back, and from her errand fled for fear.

PR. Think not that thou canst all things know, nor deem  
Such knowledge happiness : the all-knowing Fates  
No pleasure have, who sit eternally  
Spinning the unnumbered threads that Time hath woven,  
And weaves, upgathering in his furthest house  
To store from sight ; but what 'tis joy to learn  
Or use to know, that may'st thou ask of right.

IN. Then tell me, for thou knowest, what is fire?

PR. Know then, O king, that this fair earth of men, 570



## Prometheus

The Olympus of the gods, and all the heavens  
Are lesser kingdoms of the boundless space  
Wherein Fate rules ; they have their several times,  
Their seasons and the limit of their thrones,  
And from the nature of eternal things  
Springing, themselves are changed ; even as the trees  
Or birds or beasts of earth, which now arise  
To being, now in turn decay and die.

The heaven and earth thou seest, for long were held  
By Fire, a raging power, to whom the Fates 580  
Decreed a slow diminishing old age,  
But to his daughter, who is that gentle goddess,  
Queen of the clear and azure firmament,  
In heaven called Hygra, but by mortals Air,  
To her, the child of his slow doting years,  
Was given a beauteous youth, not long to outlast  
His life, but be the pride of his decay,  
And win to gentler sway his lost domains.

And when the day of time arrived, when Air  
Took o'er from her decrepit sire the third 590  
Of the Sun's kingdoms, the one-moonèd earth,  
Straight came she down to her inheritance.

Gaze on the sun with thine unshaded eye  
And shrink from what she saw. Forests of fire  
Whose waving trunks, sucking their fuel, reared  
In branched flame roaring, and their torrid shades  
Aye underlit with fire. The mountains lifted  
And fell and followed like a running sea,  
And from their swelling flanks spumed froth of fire ;  
Or, like awakening monsters, mighty mounds 600  
Rose on the plain awhile.

SEM. (*maidens*). He discovers a foe.

SEM. (*youths*). An enemy he paints.

PR. These all she quenched,  
Or charmed their fury into the dens and bowels  
Of earth to smoulder, there the vital heat

## *The Firegiver*

To hold for her creation, which then—to her aid  
Summoning high Reason from his home in heaven,—  
She wrought anew upon the temperate lands.

SEM. (*maidens*). 'Twas well Air won this kingdom of her  
sire.

SEM. (*youths*). Now say how made she green this home  
of fire.

PR. The waters first she brought, that in their streams  
And pools and seas innumerable things 611  
Brought forth, from whence she drew the fertile seeds  
Of trees and plants, and last of footed life,  
That wandered forth, and roaming to and fro,  
The rejoicing earth peopled with living sound.  
Reason advised, and Reason praised her toil;  
Which when she had done she gave him thanks, and said,  
'Fair comrade, since thou praisest what is done,  
Grant me this favour ere thou part from me :  
Make thou one fair thing for me, which shall suit 620  
With what is made, and be the best of all.'

'Twas evening, and that night Reason made man.

SEM. (*maidens*). Children of Air are we, and live by fire.

SEM. (*youths*). The sons of Reason dwelling on the  
earth.

SEM. (*maidens*). Folk of a pleasant kingdom held  
between

Fire's reign of terror and the latter day  
When dying, soon in turn his child must die.

SEM. (*youths*). Having a wise creator, above time  
Or youth or change, from whom our kind inherit  
The grace and pleasure of the eternal gods. 630

IN. But how came gods to rule this earth of Air?

PR. They also were her children who first ruled,  
Cronos, Iapetus, Hypérion,  
Theia and Rhea, and other mighty names  
That are but names—whom Zeus drove out from heaven,  
And with his tribe sits on their injured thrones.

## Prometheus

IN. There is no greater god in heaven than he.

PR. Nor none more cruel nor more tyrannous.

IN. But what can man against the power of god?

PR. Doth not man strive with him? thyself dost pray.

IN. That he may pardon our contrarious deeds. 641

PR. Alas! alas! what more contrarious deed,

What greater miracle of wrong than this,

That man should know his good and take it not?

To what god wilt thou pray to pardon this?

In vain was reason given, if man therewith

Shame truth, and name it wisdom to cry down

The unschooled promptings of his best desire.

The beasts that have no speech nor argument

Confute him, and the wild hog in the wood 650

That feels his longing, hurries straight thereto,

And will not turn his head.

IN. How mean'st thou this?

PR. Thou hast desired the good, and now canst feel  
How hard it is to kill the heart's desire.

IN. Shall Inachus rise against Zeus, as he  
Rose against Cronos and made war in heaven?

PR. I say not so, yet, if thou didst rebel,  
The tongue that counselled Zeus should counsel thee.

SEM. (*maidens*). This is strange counsel.

SEM. (*youths*). He is not  
A counsellor for gods or men. 660

IN. O that I knew where I might counsel find,

That one were sent, nay, were't the least of all

The myriad messengers of heaven, to me!

One that should say 'This morn I stood with Zeus,

He hath heard thy prayer and sent me: ask a boon,

What thing thou wilt, it shall be given thee.'

PR. What wouldst thou say to such a messenger?

IN. No need to ask then what I now might ask,

How 'tis the gods, if they have care for mortals,

Slubber our worst necessities—and the boon, 670



## Prometheus

I take thy gift ; nor hast thou stood more firm  
To every point of thy strange chequered tale,  
Revealing, threatening, offering more and more,  
And never all, than I to this resolve.

PR. I knew thy heart would fail not at the hour.

IN. Nay, failed I now, what were my years of toil  
More than the endurance of a harnessed brute,  
Flogged to his daily work, that cannot view 710  
The high design to which his labour steps ?  
And I of all men were dishonoured most  
Shrinking in fear, who never shrank from toil,  
And found abjuring, thrusting stiffly back,  
The very gift for which I stretched my hands.  
What though I suffer ? are these wintry years  
Of growing desolation to be held  
As cherishable as the suns of spring ?  
Nay, only joyful can they be in seeing  
Long hopes accomplished, long desires fulfilled. 720  
And since thou hast touched ambition on the side  
Of nobleness, and stirred my proudest hope,  
And wilt fulfil this, shall I count the cost ?  
Rather decay will triumph, and cold death  
Be lapped in glory, seeing strength arise  
From weakness, from the tomb go forth a flame.

PR. 'Tis well ; thou art exalted now, the grace  
Becomes thy valiant spirit.

IN. Lo ! on this day  
Which hope despaired to see, hope manifests  
A vision bright as were the dreams of youth ; 730  
When life was easy as a sleeper's faith  
Who swims in the air and dances on the sea ;  
When all the good that scarce by toil is won,  
Or not at all is won, is as a flower  
Growing in plenty to be plucked at will :  
Is it a dream again or is it truth,  
This vision fair of Greece inhabited ?

## *The Firegiver*

A fairer sight than all fair Iris sees,  
Footing her airy arch of colours spun  
From Ida to Olympus, when she stays 740  
To look on Greece and thinks the sight is fair ;  
Far fairer now, clothed with the works of men.

PR. Ay, fairer far : for nature's varied pleasaunce  
Without man's life is but a desert wild,  
Which most, where most she mocks him, needs his aid.  
She knows her silence sweeter when it girds  
His murmurous cities, her wide wasteful curves  
Larger beside his economic line ;  
Or what can add a mystery to the dark,  
As doth his measured music when it moves 750  
With rhythmic sweetness through the void of night ?  
Nay, all her loveliest places are but grounds  
Of vantage, where with geometric hand,  
True square and careful compass he may come  
To plan and plant and spread abroad his towers,  
His gardens, temples, palaces and tombs.

And yet not all thou seest, with tranced eye  
Looking upon the beauty that shall be,  
The temple-crownèd heights, the wallèd towns,  
Farms and cool summer seats, nor the broad ways 760  
That bridge the rivers and subdue the mountains,  
Nor all that travels on them, pomp or war  
Or needful merchandise, nor all the sails  
Piloting over the wind-dappled blue  
Of the summer-soothed Ægean, to thy mind  
Can picture what shall be : these are the face  
And form of beauty, but her heart and life  
Shall they be who shall see it, born to shield  
A happier birthright with intrepid arms,  
To tread down tyranny and fashion forth 770  
A virgin wisdom to subdue the world,  
To build for passion an eternal song,  
To shape her dreams in marble, and so sweet

## Prometheus

Their speech, that envious Time hearkening shall stay  
In fear to snatch, and hide his rugged hand.  
Now is the birthday of thy conquering youth,  
O man, and lo ! thy priest and prophet stand  
Beside the altar and have blessed the day.

IN. Ay, blessed be this day. Where is thy fire ?  
Or is aught else to do, ere I may take ? 780

PR. This was my message, speak and there is fire.

IN. There shall be fire. Await me here awhile.  
I go to acquaint my house, and bring them forth.

[Exit.

### CHORUS.

Hearken, O Argos, hearken !  
There will be fire.  
And thou, O Earth, give ear !  
There will be fire.

SEM. (*maidens*). Who shall be sent to fetch this fire for  
the king ?

SEM. (*youths*). Shall we put forth in boats to reap,  
And shall the waves for harvest yield 790  
The rootless flames that nimbly leap  
Upon their ever-shifting field ?

SEM. (*maidens*). Or we in olive-groves go shake  
And beat the fruiting sprays, till all  
The silv'ry glitter which they make  
Beneath into our baskets fall ?

SEM. (*youths*). To bind in sheaves and bear away  
The white unshafted darts of day ?

SEM. (*maidens*). And from the shadow one by one  
Pick up the playful oes of sun ? 800

SEM. (*youths*). Or wouldst thou mine a passage deep  
Until the darksome fire is found,  
Which prisoned long in seething sleep  
Vexes the caverns underground ?

SEM. (*maidens*). Or bid us join our palms perchance,

## *The Firegiver*

To cup the slant and chinkèd beam,  
Which mounting morn hath sent to dance  
Across our chamber while we dream?

SEM. (*youths*). Say whence and how shall we fetch this  
fire for the king?

Our hope is impatient of vain debating. 810

SEM. (*maidens*). My heart is stirred at the name of the  
wondrous thing,  
And trembles awaiting.

### *ODE.*

A coy inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,  
Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things  
Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under.  
It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings  
Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,  
And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her :  
She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820  
The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth ; and later  
The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night ;  
'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,  
With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah ! how surely,  
How soon and surely will disenchantment come,  
When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,  
And drives the master spirit away from his home ;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning  
Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830  
Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,  
As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,  
And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning ;  
Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite !



## Prometheus

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest  
To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright :  
To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest ;  
Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting  
The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest  
With wonder everlasting.

840

## SECOND PART

*Re-enter from the palace INACHUS, with ARGEIA and IO.*

### INACHUS.

THAT but a small and easy thing now seems,  
Which from my house when I came forth at noon  
A dream was and beyond the reach of man.  
'Tis now a fancy of the will, a word,  
Liberty's lightest prize. Yet still as one  
Who loiters on the threshold of delight,  
Delaying pleasure for the love of pleasure,  
I dally—Come, Argeia, and share my triumph !  
And set our daughter by thee ; though her eyes  
Are young, there are no eyes this day so young  
As shall forget this day—while one thing more  
I ask of thee ; this evil, will it light  
On me or on my house or on mankind ?

850

PR. Scarce on mankind, O Inachus, for Zeus  
A second time failing will not again  
Measure his spite against their better fate.  
And now the terror, which awhile o'er Earth  
Its black wings spread, shall up to Heaven ascend  
And gnaw the tyrant's heart : for there is whispered  
A word gone forth to scare the mighty gods ;  
How one must soon be born, and born of men,

860

## *The Firegiver*

Who shall drive out their impious host from heaven,  
And from their skyey dwellings rule mankind  
In truth and love. So scarce on man will fall  
This evil, nay, nor on thyself, O king ;  
Thy name shall live an honoured name in Greece.

IN. Then on my house 'twill be. Know'st thou no more ?

PR. Know I no more ? Ay, if my purpose fail  
'Tis not for lack of knowing : if I suffer,  
'Tis not that poisonous fear hath slurred her task, 870  
Or let brave resolution walk unarmed.  
My ears are callous to the threats of Zeus,  
The direful penalties his oath hath laid  
On every good that I in heart and hand  
Am sworn to accomplish, and for all his threats,  
Lest their accomplishment should outrun mine,  
Am bound the more. Nay, nor his evil minions,  
Nor force, nor strength, shall bend me to his will.

### *ARGEIA.*

Alas, alas, what heavy words are these,  
That in the place of joy forbid your tongue, 880  
That cloud and change his face, while desperate sorrow  
Sighs in his heart ? I came to share a triumph :  
All is dismay and terror. What is this ?

IN. True, wife, I spake of triumph, and I told thee  
The winter-withering hope of my whole life  
Has flower'd to-day in amaranth : what the hope  
Thou knowest, who hast shared ; but the condition  
I told thee not and thou hast heard : this prophet,  
Who comes to bring us fire, hath said that Zeus  
Wills not the gift he brings, and will be wroth 890  
With us that take it.

AR. O doleful change, I came  
In pious purpose, nay, I heard within  
The hymn to glorious Zeus : I rose and said,  
The mighty god now bends, he thrusts aside

## Prometheus

His heavenly supplicants to hear the prayer  
Of Inachus his servant ; let him hear.  
O let him turn away now lest he hear.  
Nay, frown not on me ; though a woman's voice  
That counsels is but heard impatiently,  
Yet by thy love, and by the sons I bare thee, 900  
By this our daughter, our last ripening fruit,  
By our long happiness and hope of more,  
Hear me and let me speak.

IN. Well, wife, speak on.

AR. Thy voice forbids more than thy words invite :  
Yet say whence comes this stranger. Know'st thou not ?  
Yet whencesoe'er, if he but wish us well,  
He will not bound his kindness in a day.  
Do nought in haste. Send now to Sicyon  
And fetch thy son Phorôneus, for his stake  
In this is more than thine, and he is wise. 910  
'Twere well Phorôneus and Ægialeus  
Were both here : maybe they would both refuse  
The strange conditions which this stranger brings.  
Were we not happy too before he came ?  
Doth he not offer us unhappiness ?  
Bid him depart, and at some other time,  
When you have well considered, then return.

IN. 'Tis his conditions that we now shall hear.

AR. O hide them yet ! Are there not tales enough  
Of what the wrathful gods have wrought on men ? 920  
Nay, 'twas this very fire thou now wouldst take,  
Which vain Salmoneus, son of Æolus,  
Made boast to have, and from his rattling car  
Threw up at heaven to mock the lightning. Him  
The thunderer stayed not to deride, but sent  
One blinding fork, that in the vacant sky  
Shook like a serpent's tongue, which is but seen  
In memory, and he was not, or for burial  
Rode with the ashes of his royal city

## *The Firegiver*

Upon the whirlwind of the riven air. 930  
And after him his brother Athamas,  
King of Orchomenos, in frenzy fell  
For Hera's wrath, and raving killed his son ;  
And would have killed fair Ino, but that she fled  
Into the sea, preferring there to woo  
The choking waters, rather than that the arm  
Which had so oft embraced should do her wrong.  
For which old crimes the gods yet unappeased  
Demand a sacrifice, and the king's son  
Dreads the priest's knife, and all the city mourns. 940  
Or shall I say what shameful fury it was  
With which Poseidon smote Pasiphaë,  
But for neglect of a recorded vow :  
Or how Actæon fared of Artemis  
When he surprised her, most himself surprised :  
And even while he looked his boasted bow  
Fell from his hands, and through his veins there ran  
A strange oblivious trouble, darkening sense  
Till he knew nothing but a hideous fear  
Which bade him fly, and faster, as behind 950  
He heard his hounds give tongue, that through the wood  
Were following, closing, caught him and tore him down.  
And many more thus perished in their prime ;  
Lycaon and his fifty sons, whom Zeus  
In their own house spied on, and unawares  
Watching at hand, from his disguise arose.  
And overset the table where they sat  
Around their impious feast and slew them all :  
Alcyonè and Ceyx, queen and king,  
Who for their arrogance were changed to birds : 960  
And Cadmus now a serpent, once a king :  
And saddest Niobe, whom not the love  
Of Leto aught availed, when once her boast  
Went out, though all her crime was too much pride  
Of heaven's most precious gift, her children fair.

## Prometheus

Six daughters had she, and six stalwart sons ;  
But Leto bade her two destroy the twelve.  
And somewhere now, among lone mountain rocks  
On Sipylus, where couch the nymphs at night  
Who dance all day by Achelous' stream, 970  
The once proud mother lies, herself a rock,  
And in cold breast broods o'er the goddess' wrong.

IN. Now hush thy fear. See how thou tremblest still.  
Or if thou fear, fear passion ; for the freshes  
Of tenderness and motherly love will drown  
The eye of judgment : yet, since even excess  
Of the soft quality fits woman well,  
I praise thee ; nor would ask thee less to aid  
With counsel, than in love to share my choice.  
Tho' weak thy hands to poise, thine eye may mark 980  
This balance, how the good of all outweighs  
The good of one or two, though these be us.  
Let not reluctance shame the sacrifice  
Which in another thou wert first to praise.

AR. Alas for me, for thee and for our children,  
Who, being our being, having all our having,  
If they fare ill, our pride lies in the dust.

IN. O deem not a man's children are but those  
Out of his loins engendered—our spirit's love  
Hath such prolific consequence, that Virtue 990  
Cometh of ancestry more pure than blood,  
And counts her seed as sand upon the shore.  
Happy is he whose body's sons proclaim  
Their father's honour, but more blest to whom  
The world is dutiful, whose children spring  
Out of all nations, and whose pride the proud  
Rise to regenerate when they call him sire.

AR. Thus, husband, ever have I bought and buy  
Nobleness cheaply being linked with thee.  
Forgive my weakness ; see, I now am bold ; 1000  
Tell me the worst I'll hear and wish 'twere more.

## *The Firegiver*

IN. Retire—thy tears perchance may stir again.

AR. Nay, I am full of wonder and would hear.

PR. Bid me not tell if ye have fear to hear ;

But have no fear. Knowledge of future things  
Can nothing change man's spirit : and though he seem  
To aim his passion darkly, like a shaft  
Shot toward some fearful sound in thickest night,  
He hath an owl's eye, and must blink at day.

The springs of memory, that feed alike 1010

His thought and action, draw from furthest time  
Their constant source, and hardly brook constraint  
Of actual circumstance, far less attend  
On glassed futurity ; nay, death itself,  
His fate unquestioned, his foretasted pain,  
The certainty foreknown of things unknown,  
Cannot discourage his habitual being  
In its appointed motions, to make waver  
His eager hand, nor loosen the desire  
Of the most feeble melancholy heart 1020  
Even from the unhopefullest of all her dreams.

IN. Since then I long to know, now something say  
Of what will come to mine when I am gone.

PR. And let the maid too hear, for 'tis of her  
I speak, to tell her whither she should turn  
The day ye drive her forth from hearth and home.

IN. What say'st thou? drive her out? and we? from  
home?

Banish the comfort of our eyes? Nay rather  
Believe that these obedient hands will tear  
The heart out of my breast, ere it do this. 1030

PR. When her wild cries arouse the house at night,  
And, running to her bed, ye see her set  
Upright in tranced sleep, her starting hair  
With deathly sweat bedewed, in horror shaking,  
Her eyeballs fixed upon the unbodied dark,  
Through which a draping mist of luminous gloom

## Prometheus

Drifts from her couch away,—when, if asleep,  
She walks as if awake, and if awake  
Dreams, and as one who nothing hears or sees,  
Lives in a sick and frantic mood, whose cause 1040  
She understands not or is loth to tell—

AR. Ah, ah, my child, my child!—Dost thou feel aught?  
Speak to me—nay, 'tis nothing—hearken not.

PR. Ye then distraught with sorrow, neither knowing  
Whether to save were best or lose, will seek  
Apollo's oracle.

IN. And what the answer?  
Will it discover nought to avert this sorrow?

PR. Or else thy whole race perish root and branch.

IN. Alas! alas!

PR. Yet shall she live though lost; from human form  
Changed, that thou wilt not know thy daughter more. 1051

IN. Woe, woe! my thought was praying for her death.

PR. In Hera's temple shall her prison be  
At high Mycenæ, till from heaven be sent  
Hermes, with song to soothe and sword to slay  
The beast whose hundred eyes devour the door.

IN. Enough, enough is told, unless indeed,  
The beast once slain, thou canst restore our child.

PR. Nay, with her freedom will her wanderings  
Begin. Come hither, child—nay, let her come: 1060  
What words remain to speak will not offend her,  
And shall in memory quicken, when she looks  
To learn where she should go;—for go she must,  
Stung by the venomous fly, whose angry flight  
She still will hear about her, till she come  
To lay her sevenfold-carried burden down  
Upon the Æthiop shore where he shall reign.

IN. But say—say first, what form—

PR. In snow-white hide  
Of those that feel the goad and wear the yoke. 1069

IN. Round-hoofed, or such as tread with cloven foot?

## *The Firegiver*

PR. Wide-horned, large-eyed, broad-fronted, and the feet  
Cloven which carry her to her far goal.

IN. Will that of all these evils be the term?

PR. Ay, but the journey first which she must learn.  
Hear now, my child ; the day when thou art free,  
Leaving the lion-gate, descend and strike  
The Trêtan road to Nemea, skirting wide  
The unhunted forest o'er the watered plain  
To walled Cleônæ, whence the traversed stream  
To Corinth guides : there enter not, but pass 1080  
To narrow Isthmus, where Poseidon won  
A country from Apollo, and through the town  
Of Crommyon, till along the robber's road  
Pacing, thy left eye meet the westering sun  
O'er Geraneia, and thou reach the hill  
Of Megara, where Car thy brother's babe  
In time shall rule ; next past Eleusis climb  
Stony Panactum and the pine-clad slopes  
Of Phyle ; shun the left-hand way, and keep  
The rocks ; the second day thy feet shall tread 1090  
The plains of Græa, whence the roadway serves  
Aulis and Mycalessus to the point  
Of vext Euripus : fear not then the stream,  
Nor scenting think to taste, but plunging in  
Breast its salt current to the further shore.  
For on this island mayst thou lose awhile  
Thy maddening pest, and rest and pasture find,  
And from the heafs of bold Macistus see  
The country left and sought : but when thou feel  
Thy torment urge, move down, recross the flood, 1100  
And west by Harma's fenced gap arrive  
At seven-gated Thebes : thy friendly goddess  
Ongan Athenè has her seat without.

CHOR. Now if she may not stay thy toilsome destined  
steps,  
I pray that she may slay for thee the maddening fly.



## Prometheus

PR. Keep not her sanctuary long, but seek  
Boeotian Ascra, where the Muses' fount,  
Famed Aganippè, wells : Ocalea  
Pass, and Tilphusa's northern steeps descend  
By Alalcomenæ, the goddess' town. 1110  
Guard now the lake's low shore, till thou have crossed  
Hyrcana and Cephissus, the last streams  
Which feed its reedy pools, when thou shalt come  
Between two mountains that enclose the way  
By peakèd Abæ to Hyampolis.  
The right-hand path that thither parts the vale  
Opes to Cyrtonè and the Locrian lands ;  
Toward Elateia thou, where o'er the marsh  
A path with stones is laid ; and thence beyond  
To Thronium, Tarphe, and Thermopylæ, 1120  
Where rocky Lamia views the Maliac gulf.

CHOR. If further she should go, will she not see  
That other Argos, the Dodonian land ?

PR. Crossing the Phthian hills thou next shalt reach  
Pharsalus, and Olympus' peakèd snows  
Shall guide thee o'er the green Pelasgic plains  
For many a day, but to Argissa come  
Let old Peneius thy slow pilot be  
Through Tempè, till they turn upon his left  
Crowning the wooded slopes with splendours bare. 1130  
Thence issuing forth on the Pierian shore  
Northward of Ossa thou shalt touch the lands  
Of Macedon.

CHOR. Alas, we wish thee speed,  
But bid thee here farewell ; for out of Greece  
Thou goest 'mongst the folk whose chattering speech  
Is like the voice of birds, nor home again  
Wilt thou return.

PR. Thy way along the coast  
Lies till it southward turn, when thou shalt seek  
Where wide on Strymon's plain the hindered flood

## *The Firegiver*

Spreads like a lake ; thy course to his oppose 1140  
And face him to the mountain whence he comes :  
Which doubled, Thrace receives thee : barbarous names  
Of mountain, town and river, and a people  
Strange to thine eyes and ears, the Agathyrsi,  
Of pictured skins, who owe no marriage law,  
And o'er whose gay-spun garments sprent with gold  
Their hanging hair is blue. Their torrent swim  
That measures Europe in two parts, and go  
Eastward along the sea, to mount the lands  
Beyond man's dwelling, and the rising steeps 1150  
That face the sun untrodden and unnamed.—

Know to earth's verge remote thou then art come,  
The Scythian tract and wilderness forlorn,  
Through whose rude rocks and frosty silences  
No path shall guide thee then, nor my words now.  
There as thou toilest o'er the treacherous snows,  
A sound then thou shalt hear to stop thy breath,  
And prick thy trembling ears ; a far-off cry,  
Whose throat seems the white mountain and its passion  
The woe of earth. Flee not, nor turn not back : 1160  
Let thine ears drink and guide thine eyes to see  
That sight whose terrors shall assuage thy terror,  
Whose pain shall kill thy pain. Stretched on the rock,  
Naked to scorching sun, to pinching frost,  
To wind and storm and beaks of wingèd fiends  
From year to year he lies. Refrain to ask  
His name and crime—nay, haply when thou see him  
Thou wilt remember—'tis thy tyrant's foe,  
Man's friend, who pays his chosen penalty.  
Draw near, my child, for he will know thy need, 1170  
And point from land to land thy further path.

### CHORUS.

O miserable man, hear now the worst.  
O weak and tearful race,

## *Prometheus*

Born to unhappiness, see now thy cause  
Doomed and accurst !

It surely were enough, the bad and good  
Together mingled, against chance and ill  
To strive, and prospering by turns,  
Now these, now those, now folly and now skill,  
Alike by means well understood  
Or 'gainst all likelihood ;  
Loveliness slaving to the unlovely will  
That overrides the right and laughs at law.

1180

But always all in awe  
And imminent dread :  
Because there is no mischief thought or said,  
Imaginable or unguessed,  
But it may come to be ; nor home of rest,  
Nor hour secure : but anywhere,  
At any moment ; in the air,  
Or on the earth or sea,  
Or in the fair  
And tender body itself it lurks, creeps in,  
Or seizes suddenly,  
Torturing, burning, withering, devouring,  
Shaking, destroying ; till tormented life  
Sides with the slayer, not to be,  
And from the cruel strife  
Falls to fate overpowering.

1190

Or if some patient heart,  
In toilsome steps of duty tread apart,  
Thinking to win her peace within herself,  
And thus awhile succeed :  
She must see others bleed,  
At others' misery moan,  
And learn the common suffering is her own,  
From which it is no freedom to be freed :

1200

## *The Firegiver*

Nay, Nature, her best nurse,  
Is tender but to breed a finer sense,  
Which she may easier wound, with smart the worse 1210  
And torture more intense.

And no strength for thee but the thought of duty,  
Nor any solace but the love of beauty.  
O Right's toil unrewarded !  
O Love's prize unaccorded !

I say this might suffice,  
O tearful and unstable  
And miserable man,  
Were't but from day to day  
Thy miserable lot, 1220  
This might suffice, I say,  
To term thee miserable.  
But thou of all thine ills too must take thought,  
Must grow familiar till no curse astound thee,  
With tears recall the past,  
With tears the times forecast ;  
With tears, with tears thou hast  
The scapeless net spread in thy sight around thee.

How then support thy fate,  
O miserable man, if this befall, 1230  
That he who loves thee and would aid thee, daring  
To raise an arm for thy deliverance,  
Must for his courage suffer worse than all ?

IN. Bravest deliverer, for thy prophecy  
Has torn the veil which hid thee from my eyes,  
If thyself art that spirit, of whom some things  
Were darkly spoken,—nor can I doubt thou art,  
Being that the heaven its fire withholds not from thee  
Nor time his secrets,—tell me now thy name,  
That I may praise thee rightly ; and my late 1240

## *Prometheus*

Unwitting words pardon thou, and these who still  
In blinded wonder kneel not to thy love.

PR. Speak not of love. See, I am moved with hate,  
And fiercest anger, which will sometimes spur  
The heart to extremity, till it forget  
That there is any joy save furious war.

Nay, were there now another deed to do,  
Which more could hurt our enemy than this,  
Which here I stand to venture, here would I leave thee  
Conspiring at his altar, and fly off

1250

To plunge the branding terror in his soul.  
But now the rising passion of my will  
Already jars his reaching sense, already  
From heaven he bids his minion Hermes forth  
To bring his only rebel to his feet.  
Therefore no more delay, the time is short.

IN. I take, I take. 'Tis but for thee to give.

PR. O heavenly fire, life's life, the eye of day,  
Whose nimble waves upon the starry night  
Of boundless ether love to play,  
Carrying commands to every gliding sprite  
To feed all things with colour, from the ray  
Of thy bright-glancing, white  
And silver-spinning light :  
Unweaving its thin tissue for the bow  
Of Iris, separating countless hues  
Of various splendour for the grateful flowers  
To crown the hasting hours,  
Changing their special garlands as they choose.

1260

O spirit of rage and might,  
Who canst unchain the links of winter stark,  
And bid earth's stubborn metals flow like oil.  
Her porphyrous heart-veins boil ;  
Whose arrows pierce the cloudy shields of dark ;  
Let now this flame, which did to life awaken

1270

## *The Firegiver*

Beyond the cold dew-gathering veils of morn,  
And thence by me was taken,  
And in this reed was borne,  
A smothered theft and gift to man below,  
Here with my breath revive,  
Restore thy lapsed realm, and be the sire  
Of many an earthly fire.

1280

O flame, flame bright and live,  
Appear upon the altar as I blow.

CHOR. 'Twas in the marish reed.  
See to his mouth he sets its hollow flute  
And breathes therein with heed,  
As one who from a pipe with breathings mute  
Will music's voice evoke.—  
See, the curl of a cloud.

1290

IN. The smoke, the smoke !

SEMICHORUS. Thin clouds mounting higher.

IN. 'Tis smoke, the smoke of fire.

SEMICHORUS. Thick they come and thicker,

Quick arise and quicker,

Higher still and higher.

Their wreaths the wood enfold.

—I see a spot of gold.

They spring from a spot of gold,

Red gold, deep among

The leaves : a golden tongue.

O behold, behold,

Dancing tongues of gold,

That leaping aloft flicker,

Higher still and higher.

IN. 'Tis fire, the flame of fire !

SEMICHORUS. The blue smoke overhead

Is turned to angry red.

The fire, the fire, it stirs.

Hark, a crackling sound,

1300

1310

## Prometheus

As when all around  
Ripened pods of furze  
Split in the parching sun  
Their dry caps one by one,  
And shed their seeds on the ground.

—Ah! what clouds arise.

Away! O come away.

The wind-wafted smoke,  
Blowing all astray,  
Blinds and pricks my eyes.

Ah! I choke, I choke.

—All the midst is rent:

See, the twigs are all  
By the flaming spent  
White and gold, and fall.

How they writhe, resist,  
Blacken, flake, and twist,  
Snap in gold and fall.

—See the stars that mount,

Momentary bright

Flitting specks of light

More than eye can count.

Insects of the air,

As in summer night

Show a fire in flying

Flickering here and there,

Waving past and dying.

—Look, a common cone

Of the mountain pine

Solid gold is grown;

Till its scales outshine,

Standing each alone

In the spiral rows

Of their fair design,

All the brightest shows

Of the sun's decline.

[PROMETHEUS,  
*after writing his*  
*name on the al-*  
*tar, goes out un-*  
*observed.*]

1330

1340

## *The Firegiver*

—Hark, there came a hiss,  
Like a startled snake  
Sliding through the brake.  
Oh, and what is this? 1350  
Smaller flames that flee  
Sidelong from the tree,  
Hark, they hiss, they hiss.  
—How the gay flames flicker,  
Spurting, dancing, leaping  
Quicker yet and quicker,  
Higher yet and higher,  
—Flaming, flaring, fuming,  
Cracking, crackling, creeping,  
Hissing and consuming : 1360  
Mighty is the fire.

IN. Stay, stay, cease your rejoicings. Where is he,  
The prophet,—nay, what say I,—the god, the giver?

CHOR. He is not here—he is gone.

IN. Search, search around.  
Search all, search well.

CHOR. He is gone,—he is not here.

IN. The palace gate lies open : go, Argeia,  
Maybe he went within : go seek him there.

[*Exit AR.*

Look down the sea road, down the country road :  
Follow him if ye see him.

CHOR. He is not there.

IN. Strain, strain your eyes : look well : search everywhere.  
Look townwards—is he there?

*Part of CHORUS returning.* He is not there.— 1371

*Other part returning.* He is not there.

*Argeia re-entering.*

AR. He is not there.

CHOR. O see !

CHOR. See where?



## Prometheus

CHOR. See on the altar—see!

CHOR. What see ye on the altar?

CHOR. Here in front

Words newly writ.

CHOR. What words?

CHOR. A name—

IN. Ay true—

There is the name. How like a child was I,  
That I must wait till these dumb letters gave  
The shape and soul to knowledge : when the god  
Stood here so self-revealed to ears and eyes  
That, 'tis a god I said, yet wavering still, 1380  
Doubting what god,—and now, who else but he?  
I knew him, yet not well ; I knew him not :  
Prometheus—ay, Prometheus. Know ye, my children,  
This name we see was writ by him we seek.  
'Tis his own name, his own heart-stirring name,  
Feared and revered among the immortal gods :  
Divine Prometheus : see how here the large  
Cadmeian characters run, scoring out  
The hated title of his ancient foe,—  
To Zeus 'twas made,—and now 'tis to Prometheus— 1390  
Writ with the charred reed—thrift upon theft.  
He hath stolen from Zeus his altar, and with his fire  
Hath lit our sacrifice unto himself.  
Ió Prometheus, friend and firegiver,  
For good or ill thy thefts and gifts are ours.  
We worshipped thee unknowing.

CHOR. But now where is he?

IN. No need to search—we shall not see him more.  
We look in vain. The high gods when they choose  
Put on and off the solid visible shape  
Which more deceives our hasty sense, than when 1400  
Seeing them not we judge they stand aloof.  
And he, he now is gone ; his work is done :  
'Tis ours to see it be not done in vain.

## *The Firegiver*

CHOR. What is to do? speak, bid, command, we fly.

IN. Go some and fetch more wood to feed the fire;  
And some into the city to proclaim  
That fire is ours: and send out messengers  
To Corinth, Sicyon, Megara and Athens  
And to Mycenæ, telling we have fire:  
And bid that in the temples they prepare  
Their altars, and send hither careful men  
To learn of me what things the time requires.

1410

[*Exit part of CHORUS.*]

The rest remain to end our feast; and now  
Seeing this altar is no more to Zeus,  
But shall for ever be with smouldering heat  
Fed for the god who first set fire thereon,  
Change ye your hymns, which in the praise of Zeus  
Ye came to sing, and change the prayer for fire  
Which ye were wont to raise, to high thanksgiving,  
Praising aloud the giver and his gift.

1420

*Part of CHORUS.* Now our happy feast hath ending,  
While the sun in heaven descending  
Sees us gathered round a light  
Born to cheer his vacant night.  
Praising him to-day who came  
Bearing far his heavenly flame:  
Came to crown our king's desire  
With his gift of golden fire.

SEMICHORUS. My heart, my heart is freed.  
Now can I sing. I loose a shaft from my bow,  
A song from my heart to heaven, and watch it speed.  
It revels in the air, and straight to its goal doth go.

1430

I have no fear. I praise distinguishing duly:  
I praise the love that I love and I worship truly.  
Goodness I praise, not might,  
Nor more will I speak of wrong,

## Prometheus

But of lovingkindness and right ;  
And the god of my love shall rejoice at the sound of my song.

I praise him whom I have seen :  
As a man he is beautiful, blending prime and youth, 1440  
Of gentle and lovely mien,  
With the step and the eyes of truth,  
As a god,—O were I a god, but thus to be man !  
As a god, I set him above  
The rest of the gods ; for his gifts are pledges of love,  
The words of his mouth rare and precious,  
His eyes' glance and the smile of his lips are love.

He is the one  
Alone of all the gods, — — —  
Of righteous Themis the lofty-spirited son, 1450  
Who hates the wrongs they have done.  
He is the one I adore.  
For if there be love in heaven with evil to cope,—  
And he promised us more and more,—  
For what may we not hope ?

### ODE.

My soul is drunk with joy, her new desire  
In far forbidden places wanders away.  
Her hopes with free bright-coloured wings of fire  
Upon the gloom of thought 1460  
Are sailing out.  
Awhile they rise, awhile to rest they softly fall,  
Like butterflies, that flit  
Across the mountains, or upon a wall  
Winking their idle fans at pleasure sit.

O my vague desires !  
Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires :  
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime  
Rising and flying to heaven before her time :

## The Firegiver

What doth tempt you forth  
To melt in the south or shiver in the frosty north? 1470  
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,  
For ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?  
Joy, the joy of  
They  
Gone  
Foll  
*"Dreams & the light imaginings of men"*



Thes  
Coul  
My s

### WRITTEN FOR THE LADIES AT

*Leave other part of* CHORUS.  
*Part of* CHOR. Here is wood to feed the fire—  
Never let its flames expire.  
Sing ye still while we advance  
Round the fire in measured dance,  
While the sun in heaven descending  
Sees our happy feast have ending.  
Weave ye still your joyous song,  
While we bear the wood along.

SEMICHORUS. But O return,  
Return, thou flower of the gods! 1490  
Remember the limbs that toil and the hearts that yearn,  
Remember, and soon return!  
To prosper with peace and skill  
Our hands in the works of pleasure, beauty and use.  
Return, and be for us still  
Our shield from the anger of Zeus.

And he, if he raise his arm in anger to smite thee,  
And think for the good thou hast done with pain to requite  
thee,  
Vengeance I heard thee tell,  
And the curse I take for my own, 1500  
That his place is prepared in hell,

## *Prometheus*

And a greater than he shall hurl him down from his throne.

Down, down from his throne !

For the god who shall rule mankind from the deathless  
skies

f gentle and lovely mien,

With the step and the eyes of truth,

As a god,—O were I a god, but thus to be man !

As a god, I set him above

The rest of the gods ; for his gifts are pledges of love,

His words of his mouth rare and precious,

His eyes' glance and the smile of his lips are love.

1510

He is the one

# DEMETER

## *A Mask*

*"Dreams & the light imaginings of men"*



WRITTEN FOR THE LADIES AT

SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

& ACTED BY THEM

AT THE INAUGURATION OF THEIR NEW BUILDING

IN 1904



*PREVIOUS EDITION*

*Oxford : at the Clarendon Press, 1905*

## ARGUMENT OF THE PLAY

*The scene is in the flowery valley below Enna. Hades prologizes, and tells how he has come with consent of Zeus to carry off Persephone to be his queen. The Chorus of Ocean nymphs entering praise Sicily and the spring. Persephone enters with Athena and Artemis to gather flowers for the festival of Zeus. Persephone being left alone is carried off by Hades.*

*In the second act, which is ten days later, the Chorus deplore the loss of Persephone. Demeter entering upbraids them in a choric scene and describes her search for Persephone until she learnt her fate from Helios. Afterwards she describes her plan for compelling Zeus to restore her. Hermes brings from Zeus a command to Demeter that she shall return to Olympus. She sends defiance to Zeus, and the Chorus end the scene by vowing to win Poseidon to aid Demeter.*

*In the third act, which is a year later, the Chorus, who have been summoned by Demeter to witness the restoration of Persephone, lament Demeter's anger. Demeter narrates the Eleusian episode of her wanderings, until Hermes enters leading Persephone. After their greeting Demeter hears from Hermes the terms of Persephone's restoration; she is reconciled thereto by Persephone, and invites her to Eleusis. The Chorus sing and crown Persephone with flowers.*

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HADES.	}	ARTEMIS.	}
DEMETER.	}	HERMES.	}
PERSEPHONE.		Chorus of	
ATHENA.		OCEANIDES.	

# DEMETER

## HADES.

I AM the King of Hell, nor prone to vex  
Eternal destiny with weak complaint ;  
Nor when I took my kingdom did I mourn  
My lot, from heav'n expell'd, deny'd to enjoy  
Its radiant revelry and ambrosial feast,  
Nor blamed our mighty Sisters, that not one  
Would share my empire in the shades of night.

But when a younger race of gods arose,  
And Zeus set many sons on heav'nly seats,  
And many daughters dower'd with new domain, 10  
And year by year were multiply'd on earth  
Their temples and their statu'd sanctities,  
Mirrors of man's ideas that grow apace,  
Yea, since man's mind was one with my desire  
That Hell should have a queen,—for heav'n hath queens  
Many, nor on all earth reigns any king  
In unkind isolation like to me,—  
I claimed from Zeus that of the fair immortals  
One should be given to mè to grace my throne.

Willing he was, and quick to praise my rule, 20  
And of mere justice thêre had granted me  
Whome'er I chose : but ' Brother mine,' he said,  
' Great as my power among the gods, this thing  
I cannot compass, that a child of mine,  
Who once hath tasted of celestial life,  
Should all forgo, and destitute of bliss  
Descend into the shades, albeit to sit  
An equal on thy throne. Take whom thou wilt ;



## *Demeter*

But by triumphant force persuade, as erst  
I conquer'd heav'n.' Said I 'My heart is set : 30  
I take Demeter's child Persephone ;  
Dost thou consent ?' Whereto he gave his nod.  
And I am come to-day with hidden powers,  
Ev'n unto Enna's fair Sicilian field,  
To rob her from the earth. 'Tis here she wanders  
With all her train : nor is this flow'ry vale  
Fairer among the fairest vales of earth,  
Nor any flower within this flow'ry vale  
Fair above other flowers, as she is fairest  
Among immortal goddesses, the daughter 40  
Of gentle-eyed Demeter ; and her passion  
Is for the flowers, and every tenderness  
That I have long'd for in my fierce abodes.  
But she hath always in attendant guard  
The dancing nymphs of Ocean, and to-day  
The wise Athena and chaste Artemis  
Indulge her girlish fancy, gathering flowers  
To deck the banner of my golden brother,  
Whose thought they guess not, tho' their presence here  
Affront his will and mine. If once alone 50  
I spy her, I can snatch her swiftly down ;  
And after shall find favour for my fault,  
When I by gentle means have won her love.  
I hear their music now. Hither they come :  
I'll to my ambush in the rocky cave. [Exit.

# Demeter

## A C T I

*Enter Chorus of Oceanides, with baskets.*

### OCEANIDES.

Gay and lovely is earth, man's decorate dwelling ;  
With fresh beauty ever varying hour to hour.  
As now bathed in azure joy she awakeneth  
With bright morn to the sun's life-giving effluence,  
Or sunk into solemn darkness aneath the stars 60  
In mysterious awe slumbereth out the night,  
Then from darkness again plunging again to day ;  
Like dolphins in a swift herd that accompany  
Poseidon's chariot when he rebukes the waves.  
But no country to me 'neath the enarching air  
Is fair as Sicily's flowery fruitful isle :  
Always lovely, whether winter adorn the hills  
With his silvery snow, or generous summer  
Outpour her heavy gold on the river-valleys.  
Her rare beauty giveth gaiety unto man, 70  
A delite dear to immortals.

### 2

And one season of all chiefly deliteth us,  
When fair Spring is afield. O happy is the Spring !  
Now birds early arouse their pretty minstreling ;  
Now down its rocky hill murmureth ev'ry rill ;  
Now all bursteth anew, wantoning in the dew  
Their bells of bonny blue, their chalices honey'd.  
Unkind frost is away ; now sunny is the day ;  
Now man thinketh aright, Life it is all delite.  
Now maids playfully dance o'er enamel'd meadows, 80  
And with goldy blossom deck forehead and bosom ;  
While old Pan rollicketh thro' the budding shadows.  
Voicing his merry reed, laughing aloud to lead  
The echoes madly rejoicing.

## Demeter

[I

### 3

We be Océanids, Persephone's lovers,  
Who all came hurrying joyfully from the sea  
Ere daybreak to obey her belovèd summons.  
At her fancy to pluck these violets, lilies,  
Windflow'rs and daffodils, all for a festival  
Whereat shé will adorn Zeuses honour'd banner. 90  
And with Persephone there cometh Artemis  
And grave Pallas . . . Hilloo ! already they approach !  
Haste, haste ! stoop to gather ! seem busy ev'ryone !  
Crowd all your wicker arcs with the meadow-lilies ;  
Lest our disreverenc'd deity should rebuke  
The divine children of Ocean.

[Enter ATHENA, PERSEPHONE, and ARTEMIS. *Persephone has  
a basket half fill'd with gasher'd flowers.*]

### ATHENA.

These then are Enna's flowery fields, and here  
In midmost isle the garden of thy choice ?

### PERSEPHONE.

Is not all as I promist ? Feel ye not  
Your earthborn ecstasy concentr'd here ? 100  
Tell me, Athena, of thy wisdom, whence  
Cometh this joy of earth, this penetrant  
Palpitant exultation so unlike  
The balanc't calm of high Olympian state ?  
Is 't in the air, the tinted atmosphere  
Whose gauzy veil, thrown on the hills, will paint  
Their features, changing with the gradual day,  
Rosy or azure, clouded now, and now  
Again afire ? Or is it that the sun's  
Electric beams—which shot in circling fans 110  
Whirl all things with them—as they strike the earth  
Excite her yearning heart, till stir'd beneath

The rocks and silent plains, she cannot hold  
 Her fond desires, but sends them bursting forth  
 In scents and colour'd blossoms of the spring?—  
 Breathes it not in the flowers?

ATH. Fair are the flowers,  
 Dear child ; and yet to me far lovelier  
 Than all their beauty is thy love for them.  
 Whate'er I love, I contemplate my love  
 More than the object, and am so rejoic'd. 120  
 For life is one, and like a level sea  
 Life's flood of joy. Thou wond'rest at the flowers,  
 But I would teach thee wonder of thy wonder :  
 Would shew thee beauty in the desert-sand,  
 The worth of things unreckt of, and the truth  
 That thy desire and love may spring of evil  
 And ugliness, and that Earth's ecstasy  
 May dwell in darkness also, in sorrow and tears.

PER. I'd not believe it : why then should we pluck  
 The flowers and not the stalks without the flowers? 130  
 Or do thy stones breathe scent? Would not men laugh  
 To see the banner of almighty Zeus  
 Adorn'd with ragged roots and straws?—Dear Artemis,  
 How lovest thou the flowers?

*ARTEMIS.*

I'll love them better  
 Ever for thy sake, Cora ; but for me  
 The joy of Earth is in the breath of life  
 And animal motions : nor are flowery sweets  
 Dear as the scent of life. This petal'd cup,  
 What is it by the wild fawn's liquid eye  
 Eloquent as love-music 'neath the moon? 140  
 Nay, not a flower in all thy garden here,  
 Nor wer't a thousand-thousand-fold enhanc't  
 In every charm, but thou wouldst turn from it  
 To view the antler'd stag, that in the glade

## Demeter

[I

With the coy gaze of his majestic fear  
Faced thee a moment ere he turn'd to fly.

PER. But why, then, hunt and kill what thou so lovest?

AR. Dost thou not pluck thy flowers?

PER. 'Tis not the same.

Thy victims fly for life : they pant, they scream.

AR. Were they not mortal, sweet, I could not kill them.

They kill each other in their lust for life ; 151

Nay, cruelly persecute their blemisht kin :

And they that thus are exiled from the herd

Slink heart-brok'n to sepulchral solitudes,

Defenceless and dishonour'd ; there to fall

Prey to the hungry glutton of the cave,

Or stand in mute pain lingering, till they drop

In their last lair upon the ancestral bones.

PER. What is it that offends me ?

ATH. 'Tis Pity, child,

The mortal thought that clouds the brow of man 160

With dark reserve, or poisoning all delite

Drives him upon his knees in tearful prayer

To avert his momentary qualms : till Zeus

At his reiterated plaint grows wrath,

And burdens with fresh curse the curse of care.

And they that haunt with men are apt to take

Infection of his mind : thy mighty mother

Leans to his tenderness.

PER. How should man, dwelling

On earth that is so gay, himself be sad ?

Is not earth gay ? Look on the sea, the sky, 170

The flowers !

ATH. 'Tis sad to him because 'tis gay.—

For whether he consider how the flowers,

—Thy miracles of beauty above praise,—

Are wither'd in the moment of their glory,

So that of all the mounting summer's wealth

The show is chang'd each day, and each day dies,

Of no more count in Nature's estimate  
 Than crowded bubbles of the fighting foam :  
 Or whether 'tis the sea, whose azure waves  
 Play'd in the same infinity of motion 180  
 Ages ere he beheld it, and will play  
 For ages after him ;—alike 'tis sad  
 To read how beauty dies and he must die.

PER. Were I a man, I would not worship thee,  
 Thou cold essential wisdom. If, as thou say'st,  
 Thought makes men sorrowful, why help his thought  
 To quench enjoyment, who might else as I  
 Revel among bright things, and feast his sense  
 With beauty well-discern'd? Nay, why came ye  
 To share my pastime? Ye love not the flowers. 190

ATH. Indeed I love thee, child ; and love thy flowers,—  
 Nor less for loving wisely. All emotions,  
 Whether of gods or men, all loves and passions,  
 Are of two kinds ; they are either inform'd by wisdom,  
 To reason obedient,—or they are uncondacted,  
 Flames of the burning life. The brutes of earth  
 And Pan their master know these last ; the first  
 Are seen in me : betwixt the extremes there lie  
 Innumerable alloys and all of evil.

PER. Nay, and I guess your purpose with me well : 200  
 I am a child, and ye would nurse me up  
 A pupil in your school. I know ye twain  
 Of all the immortals are at one in this ;  
 Ye wage of cold disdain a bitter feud  
 With Aphrodite, and ye fear for me,  
 Lest she should draw me to her wanton way.  
 Fear not : my party is taken. Hark ! I'll tell  
 What I have chosen, what mankind shall hold  
 Devote and consecrate to me on earth :  
 It is the flowers : but only among the flowers 210  
 Those that men love for beauty, scent, or hue,  
 Having no other uses : I have found

Demeter, my good mother, heeds them not.—  
She loves vines, olives, orchards, 'the rich leas  
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats, and peas,'  
But for the idle flowers she hath little care :  
She will resign them willingly. And think not,  
Thou wise Athena, I shall go unhonour'd,  
Or rank a meaner goddess unto man.  
His spirit setteth beauty before wisdom, 220  
Pleasures above necessities, and thus  
He ever adoreth flowers. Nor this I guess  
Where rich men only and superfluous kings  
Around their palaces reform the land  
To terraces and level lawns, whereon  
Appointed slaves are told, to tend and feed  
Lilies and roses and all rarest plants  
Fetch'd from all lands ; that they—these lordly men—  
'Twixt flaunting avenues and wafted odours  
May pace in indolence : this is their bliss ; 230  
This first they do : and after, it may be,  
Within their garden set their academe :—  
But in the poorest villages, around  
The meanest cottage, where no other solace  
Comforts the eye, some simple gaiety  
Of flowers in tended garden is seen ; some pinks,  
Tulips, or crocuses that edge the path ;  
Where oft at eve the grateful labourer  
Sits in his jasmin'd porch, and takes the sun :  
And even the children, that half-naked go, 240  
Have posies in their hands, and of themselves  
Will choose a queen in whom to honour Spring,  
Dancing before her garlanded with may.  
The cowslip makes them truant, they forget  
The hour of hunger and their homely feast  
So they may cull the delicate primrose,  
Sealing their birthright with the touch of beauty ;  
With unconsider'd hecatombs assuring

Their dim sense of immortal mystery.—

Yea, rich and poor, from cradle unto grave

250

All men shall love me, shall adore my name,

And heap my everlasting shrine with flowers.

ATH. Thou sayest rightly thou art a child. May Zeus

Give thee a better province than thy thought.

[*Music heard.*

AR. Listen! the nymphs are dancing. Let us go!

[*They move off.*

Come, Cora; wilt thou learn a hunting dance?

I'll teach thee.

PER. Can I learn thy hunter-step

Without thy bare legs and well-buskin'd feet?

AR. Give me thy hand.

PER. Stay! stay! I have left my flowers.

I follow.

[*Exeunt Athena and Artemis.*

[*Persephone returning to right slowly.*

They understand not—Now, praise be to Zeus,

261

That, tho' I sprang not from his head, I know

Something that Pallas knows not.

[*She has come to where her basket lies. In stooping towards it she kneels to pluck a flower: and then comes to sit on a bank with the basket in hand on her knees, facing the audience.*]

Thou tiny flower!

Art thou not wise?

Who taught thee else, thou frail anemone,

Thy starry notion, thy wind-wavering motion,

Thy complex of chaste beauty, unimagined

Till thou art seen?—And how so wisely, thou,

Indifferent to the number of thy rays,

270

While others are so strict? This six-leaved tulip,

—He would not risk a seventh for all his worth,—

He thought to attain unique magnificence

By sheer simplicity—a pointed oval

Bare on a stalk erect: and yet, grown old

He will his young idea quite abandon,



In his dishevel'd fury wantoning  
 Beyond belief . . . Some are four-leaved : this poppy  
 Will have but four. He, like a hurried thief,  
 Stuffs his rich silks into too small a bag— 280  
 I think he watch'd a summer-butterfly  
 Creep out all crumpled from his winter-case,  
 Trusting the sun to smooth his tender tissue  
 And sleek the velvet of his painted wings :—  
 And so doth he.—Between such different schemes,  
 Such widely varied loveliness, how choose ?  
 Yet loving all, one should be most belov'd,  
 Most intimately mine ; to mortal men  
 My emblem : tho' I never find in one  
 The sum of all distinctions.—Rose were best : 290  
 But she is passion's darling, and unkind  
 To handle—set her by.—Choosing for odour,  
 The violet were mine—men call her modest,  
 Because she hides, and when in company  
 Lacks manner and the assertive style of worth :—  
 While this narcissus here scorns modesty,  
 Will stand up what she is, tho' something prim :  
 Her scent, a saturation of one tone,  
 Like her plain symmetry, leaves nought to fancy :—  
 Whereas this iris,—she outvieth man's 300  
 Excellent artistry ; elaboration  
 Confounded with simplicity, till none  
 Can tell which sprang of which. Could I but find  
 A scented iris, I should be content :  
 Yet men would call me proud : Iris is Pride.—  
 To-day I'll favour thee, sweet violet ;  
 Thou canst live in my bosom. I'll not wrong thee  
 Wearing thee in Olympus.—Help ! help ! Ay me !  
 [*Persephone rises to her feet, and amidst a contrivance of confused  
 darkness Hades is seen rushing from behind. He seizes her and  
 drags her backward. Her basket is thrown up and the flowers  
 scattered.*]

## A C T II

*CHORUS.*

## I (a)

Bright day succeedeth unto day—

Night to pensive night—

310

With his towering ray

Of all-fathering light—

With the solemn trance

Of her starry dance.—

Nought is new or strange

In the eternal change.—

As the light clouds fly

O'er the tree-tops high,

So the days go by.—

Ripples that arrive

320

On the sunny shore,

Dying to their live

Music evermore.—

Like pearls on a thread,—

Like notes of a song,—

Like the measur'd tread

Of a dancing throng.—

## (β)

Ocëanides are we,

Nereids of the foam,

But we left the sea

330

On the earth to roam

With the fairest Queen

That the world hath seen.—

Why amidst our play  
Was she sped away?—  
Over hill and plain  
We have sought in vain;  
She comes not again.—  
Not the Naiads knew  
On their dewy lawns :—  
Not the laughing crew  
Of the leaping Fauns.—  
Now, since she is gone,  
All our dance is slow,  
All our joy is done,  
And our song is woe.—

340

## II

Saw ye the mighty Mother, where she went  
Searching the land?  
Nor night nor day resting from her lament,  
With smoky torch in hand.  
Her godhead in the passion of a sorrow spent  
Which not her mind could suffer, nor heart withstand?—

350

<sup>2</sup>  
Enlanguor'd like a fasting lioness,  
That prowls around  
Robb'd of her whelps, in fury comfortless  
Until her lost be found :  
Implacable and terrible in her wild distress ;  
And thro' the affrighted country her roars resound.—

<sup>3</sup>  
But lo ! what form is there ? Thine eyes awaken !  
See ! see ! O say,  
Is not that she, the furious, the forsaken ?  
She cometh, lo ! this way ;  
Her golden-rippling hair upon her shoulders shaken,  
And all her visage troubled with deep dismay.

360

*DEMETER (entering).*

Here is the hateful spot, the hollow rock  
Whence the fierce ravisher sprang forth—

(*seeing the nymphs*) Ah! ye!

I know you well: ye are the nymphs of Ocean.

Ye, graceful as your watery names

And idle as the mimic flames

That skip upon his briny floor,

370

When the hot sun smiteth thereo'er ;

Why did ye leave your native waves ?

Did false Poseidon, to my hurt

Leagued with my foe, bid you desert

Your opalescent pearly caves,

Your dances on the shelly strand ?

CH. Poseidon gave us no command,

Lady ; it was thy child Persephone,

Whose beauty drew us from the sea.

DEM. Ill company ye lent, ill-fated guards !

380

How was she stolen from your distracted eyes ?

CH. There, where thou standest now, stood she companion'd

By wise Athena and bright Artemis.

We in flower-gathering dance and idle song

Were wander'd off apart ; we fear'd no wrong.

DEM. In heav'n I heard her cry : ye nothing heard ?

CH. We heard no cry—How couldst thou hear in heaven ?

Ask us not of her :—we have nought to tell.—

DEM. I seek not knowledge of you, for I know.

CH. Thou knowest ? Ah, mighty Queen, deign then to tell  
If thou hast found her. Tell us—tell us—tell !

391

DEM. Oh, there are calls that love can hear,

That strike not on the outward ear.

None heard save I : but with a dart

Of lightning-pain it pierc'd my heart,

That call for aid, that cry of fear.  
It echo'd from the mountain-steeps  
Down to the dark of Ocean-deeps ;  
O'er all the isle, from ev'ry hill  
It pierc'd my heart and echoes still, 400

Ay me ! Ay me !

CH. Where is she, O mighty Queen ?—Tell us—O tell !—

DEM. Swift unto earth, in frenzy led  
By Cora's cry, from heav'n I sped.  
Immortal terror froze my mind :  
I fear'd, ev'n as I yearn'd to find  
My child, my joy, faln from my care  
Wrong'd or distrest, I knew not where,

Cora, my Cora !

Nor thought I whither first to fly, 410  
Answ'ring the appeal of that wild cry :  
But still it drew me till I came  
To Enna, calling still her name,

Cora, my Cora !

CH. If thou hast found her, tell us, Queen, O tell !

DEM. Nine days I wander'd o'er the land.  
From Enna to the eastern strand  
I sought, and when the first night came  
I lit my torch in Etna's flame.  
But neither 'mid the chestnut woods 420  
That rustle o'er his stony floods ;  
Nor yet at daybreak on the meads  
Where bountiful Symaethus leads  
His chaunting boatmen to the main ;  
Nor where the road on Hybla's plain  
Is skirted by the spacious corn ;  
Nor where embattled Syracuse  
With lustrous temple fronts the morn ;  
Nor yet by dolphin'd Arethuse ;  
Nor when I crossed Anapus wide, 430  
Where Cyane, his reedy bride,

Uprushing from her crystal well,  
 Doth not his cold embrace repel ;  
 Nor yet by western Eryx, where  
 Gay Aphrodite high in air  
 Beams gladness from her marble chair ;  
 Nor 'mong the mountains that enfold  
 Panormos in her shell of gold,  
 Found I my Cora : no reply  
 Came to my call, my helpless cry, 440  
       Cora, my Cora !

CH. Hast thou not found her, then ? Tell us—O tell !

DEM. What wonder that I never found  
 Her whom I sought on mortal ground,  
 When she—(now will ye understand ?)—  
 Dwelt in the land that is no land,  
 The fruitless and unseason'd plain  
 Where all lost things are found again ;  
 Where man's distract imaginings  
 Head-downward hang on bat-like wings, 450  
 'Mid mummied hopes, sleep-walking cares,  
 Crest-faln illusions and despairs,  
 The tortur'd memories of crime,  
 The outcasts of forgotten time ?

CH. Where is she, Queen ?—where ?—where ?

DEM. Nor had I known,  
 Had not himself high Helios seen and told me.

CH. Alas ! Alas ! we cannot understand—  
 We pray, dear Queen, may great Zeus comfort thee.

DEM. Yea, pray to Zeus ; but pray ye for yourselves,  
 That he have pity on you, for there is need. 460  
 Or let Zeus hear a strange, unwonted prayer  
 That in his peril he will aid himself ;  
 For I have said, nor coud his Stygian oath  
 Add any sanction to a mother's word,  
 That, if he give not back my daughter to me,  
 Him will I slay, and lock his pining ghost

In sleepy prisons of unhallowing hell.

CH. (*aside*). Alas ! alas ! she is distraught with grief.—  
What comfort can we make?—How reason with her?— 469  
(*to D.*) This could not be, great Queen. How could it be  
That Zeus should be destroy'd, or thou destroy him ?

DEM. Yea, and you too : so make your prayer betimes.

CH. We pray thee, Lady, sit thou on this bank  
And we will bring thee food ; or if thou thirst,  
Water. We know too in what cooling caves  
The sly Fauns have bestow'd their skins of wine.

DEM. Ye simple creatures, I need not these things,  
And stand above your pity. Think ye me  
A woman of the earth derang'd with grief?  
Nay, nay : but I have pity on your pity, 480  
And for your kindness I will ease the trouble  
Wherewith it wounds your gentleness : attend !  
Ye see this jewel here, that from my neck  
Hangs by this golden chain.

[*They crowd near to see.*

Look, 'tis a picture,

'Tis of Persephone.

CH. How?—Is that she?—  
A crown she weareth.—She was never wont  
Thus . . .—nor her robe thus—and her countenance  
Hath not the smile which drew us from the sea.

DEM. Daedalus cut it, in the year he made  
The Zibian Aphrodite, and Hephaestus 490  
O'erlookt and praised the work. I treasure it  
Beyond all other jewels that I have,  
And on this chain I guard it. Say now : think ye  
It cannot fall loose until every link  
Of all the chain be broken, or if one  
Break, will it fall?

CH. Surely if one break, Lady,  
The chain is broken and the jewel falls.

DEM. 'Tis so. Now hearken diligently. All life  
Is as this chain, and Zeus is as the jewel.

The universal life dwells first in the Earth, 500  
 The stones and soil ; therefrom the plants and trees  
 Exhale their being ; and on them the brutes  
 Feeding elaborate their sentient life,  
 And from these twain mankind ; and in mankind  
 A spirit lastly is form'd of subtler sort  
 Whereon the high gods live, sustain'd thereby,  
 And feeding on it, as plants on the soil,  
 Or animals on plants. Now see ! I hold,  
 As well ye know, one whole link of this chain :  
 If I should kill the plants, must not man perish ? 510  
 And if he perish, then the gods must die.

CH. If this were so, thou wouldst destroy thyself.

DEM. And therefore Zeus will not believe my word.

CH. Nor we believe thee, Lady : it cannot be  
 That thou shouldst seek to mend a private fortune  
 By universal ruin, and restore  
 Thy daughter by destruction of thyself.

DEM. Ye are not mothers, or ye would not wonder.  
 In me, who hold from great all-mother Rhea  
 Heritage of essential motherhood, 520  
 Ye would look rather for unbounded passion.  
 Could I, the tenderness of Nature's heart,  
 Exist, were I unheedful to protect  
 From wrong and ill the being that I gave,  
 The unweeting passions that I fondly nurtured  
 To hopes of glory, the young confidence  
 In growing happiness ? Shall I throw by  
 As self-delusion the supreme ambition,  
 Which I encourag'd till parental fondness  
 Bore the prophetic blessing, on whose truth 530  
 My spirit throve ? Oh never ! nay, nay, nay !  
 That were the one disaster, and if aid  
 I cannot, I can mightily avenge.  
 On irremediable wrong I shrink not  
 To pile immortal ruin, there to lie



As trophies on a carven tomb : nor less  
For that no memory of my deed survive,  
Nor any eye to see, nor tongue to tell.

CH. So vast injustice, Lady, were not good.

DEM. To you I seem unjust involving man.

540

CH. Why should man suffer in thy feud with Zeus?

DEM. Let Zeus relent. There is no other way.

I will destroy the seeds of plant and tree :

Vineyard and orchard, oliveyard and cornland

Shall all withhold their fruits, and in their stead

Shall flourish the gay blooms that Cora loved.

There shall be dearth, and yet so gay the dearth

That all the land shall look in holiday

With mockery of foison ; every field

With splendour aflame. For wheat the useless poppy 550

In sheeted scarlet ; and for barley and oats

The blue and yellow weeds that mock men's toil,

Centaury and marigold in chequer'd plots :

Where seed is sown, or none, shall dandelions

And wretched ragwort vie, orchis and iris

And garish daisy, and for every flower

That in this vale she pluckt, shall spring a thousand.

Where'er she stept anemones shall crowd,

And the sweet violet. These things shall ye see.

—But I behold him whom I came to meet,

560

Hermes :—he, be he laden howsoe'er,

Will heavier-laden to his lord return.

*HERMES (entering).*

Mighty Demeter, Mother of the seasons,

Bountiful all-sustainer, fairest daughter

Of arch-ancestral Rhea,—to thee Zeus sendeth

Kindly message. He grieves seeing thy godhead

Offended wrongly at eternal justice,

'Gainst destiny ordain'd idly revolting.

Ever will he, thy brother, honour thee  
 And willingly aid thee ; but since now thy daughter 570  
 Is raised to a place on the tripartite throne,  
 He finds thee honour'd duly and not injur'd.  
 Wherefore he bids thee now lament no more,  
 But with thy presence grace the courts of heav'n.

DEM. Bright Hermes, Argus-slayer, born of Maia,  
 Who bearest empty words, the mask of war,  
 To Zeus make thine own words, that thou hast found me  
 Offended,—that I still lament my daughter,  
 Nor heed his summons to the courts of heav'n.

HER. Giv'st thou me nought but these relentless words?

DEM. I send not words, nor dost thou carry deeds. 581  
 But know, since heav'n denies my claim, I take  
 Earth for my battle-field. Curse and defiance  
 Shall shake his throne, and, readier then for justice,  
 Zeus will enquire my terms : thou, on that day,  
 Remember them ; that he shall bid thee lead  
 Persephone from Hades by the hand,  
 And on this spot, whence she was stol'n, restore her  
 Into mine arms. Execute that ; and praise  
 Shall rise from earth and peace return to heav'n. 590

HER. How dare I carry unto Zeus thy threats?

DEM. Approach him with a gift : this little wallet.

[*Giving a little bag of seeds.*

I will not see thee again until the day  
 Thou lead my daughter hither thro' the gates of Hell. [*Going.*

HER. Ah ! mighty Queen, the lightness of thy gift  
 Is greater burden than thy weighty words.

[*Exeunt severally r. and l.*

### CHORUS.

(1) Sisters ! what have we heard !  
 Our fair Persephone, the flower of the earth,  
 By Hades stolen away, his queen to be.

(*others*) Alas !—alas !—ay me !

600

- (2) And great Demeter's bold relentless word  
To Hermes given,  
Threatening mankind with dearth.

(*others*) Ay me ! alas ! alas !—

- (3 *or* 1) She in her sorrow strong  
Fears not to impeach the King of Heaven,  
And combat wrong with wrong.—

(*others confusedly*) What can we do ?—Alas !—  
Back to our ocean-haunts return  
To weep and mourn.—

610

What use to mourn ?—

Nay, nay !—Away with sorrow :

Let us forget to-day

And look for joy to-morrow :—

- [(1) Nay, nay ! hearken to me !]

Nay, how forget that on us too,—

Yea, on us all

The curse will fall.—

- [(1) Harken ! I say !]

What can we do ? Alas ! alas !

610

- (1) Harken ! There's nought so light,  
Nothing of weight so small,  
But that in even balance 'twill avail  
Wholly to turn the scale.

Let us our feeble force unite,

And giving voice to tears,

Assail Poseidon's ears ;

Rob pleasure from his days,

Darken with sorrow all his ways,

Until his shift mind

Become to pity inclined,

And 'gainst his brother turn.

630

(*others*) 'Tis well, thou sayest well.

- (2) Yea ; for if Zeus should learn

That earth and sea were both combined

Against his cruel intent,

Sooner will he relent.

(*others*) 'Tis well—we do it—'tis well.—

(1) Come let us vow. Vow all with one accord

To harden every heart

640

Till we have won Poseidon to our part.

(*all*) We vow—we do it—we vow.

(1) Till we have conquer'd heav'n's almighty lord

And seen Persephone restored.

(*all*) We vow—we vow.

(1) Come then all ; and, as ye go,

Begin the song of woe.

*Song.*

Close up, bright flow'rs, and hang the head,

Ye beauties of the plain,

The Queen of Spring is with the dead,

650

Ye deck the earth in vain.

From your deserted vale we fly,

And where the salt waves mourn

Our song shall swell their burd'ning sigh

Until sweet joy return.

A C T III

*CHORUS.*

*Song.*

Lo where the virgin veiled in airy beams,

All-holy Morn, in splendor awakening,

Heav'n's gate hath unbarrèd, the golden

Aerial lattices set open.

With music endeth night's prisoning terror,

660

With flow'ry incense : Haste to salute the sun,

That for the day's chase, like a huntsman,

With flashing arms cometh o'er the mountain.

## Demeter

[III]

*Inter se.* That were a song for Artemis—I have heard  
Men thus salute the rising sun in spring—  
—See, we have wreaths enough and garlands plenty  
To hide our lov'd Persephone from sight  
If she should come.— But think you she will come?—  
If one might trust the heavens, it is a morn  
Promising happiness—'Tis like the day  
That brought us all our grief a year ago.— 670

### ODE.

O that the earth, or only this fair isle wer' ours  
Amid the ocean's blue billows,  
With flow'ry woodland, stately mountain and valley,  
Cascading and liliated river ;  
Nor ever a mortal envious, laborious,  
By anguish or dull care opprest,  
Should come polluting with remorseful countenance  
Our haunt of easy gaiety.  
For us the grassy slopes, the country's airiness, 680  
The lofty whispering forest,  
Where rapturously Philomel invoketh the night  
And million eager throats the morn ;  
With doves at evening softly cooing, and mellow  
Cadences of the dewy thrush.  
We love the gentle deer, the nimble antelope ;  
Mice love we and springing squirrels ;  
To watch the gaudy flies visit the blooms, to hear  
On ev'ry mead the grasshopper.  
All thro' the spring-tide, thro' the indolent summer, 690  
(If only this fair isle wer' ours)  
Here might we dwell, forgetful of the weedy caves  
Beneath the ocean's blue billows.

### *Enter Demeter.*

CH. Hail, mighty Mother !—Welcome, great Demeter !—  
(1) This day bring joy to thee, and peace to man !

DEM. I welcome you, my loving true allies,  
 And thank you, who for me your gentle tempers  
 Have stiffen'd in rebellion, and so long  
 Harass'd the foe. Here on this field of flowers  
 I have bid you share my victory or defeat. 700  
 For Hermes hath this day command from Zeus  
 To lead our lost Persephone from Hell,  
 Hither whence she was stolen.—And yet, alas !  
 Tho' Zeus is won, some secret power thwarts me ;  
 All is not won : a cloud is o'er my spirit.  
 Wherefore not yet I boast, nor will rejoice  
 Till mine eyes see her, and my arms enfold her,  
 And breast to breast we meet in fond embrace.

CH. Well hast thou fought, great goddess, so to wrest  
 Zeus from his word. We thank thee, call'd to share 710  
 Thy triumph, and rejoice. Yet O, we pray,  
 Make thou this day a day of peace for man !  
 Even if Persephone be not restored,  
 Whether Aidoneus hold her or release,  
 Relent thou.—Stay thine anger, mighty goddess ;  
 Nor with thy hateful famine slay mankind.

DEM. Say not that word 'relent' lest Hades hear !

CH. Consider rather if mankind should hear.

DEM. Do ye love man ?

CH. We have seen his sorrows, Lady . . .

DEM. And what can ye have seen that I know not ?—  
 His sorrow ?—Ah my sorrow !—and ye bid 721  
 Me to relent ; whose deeds of fond compassion  
 Have in this year of agony built up  
 A story for all time that shall go wand'ring  
 Further than I have wander'd ;—whereto all ears  
 Shall hearken ever, as ye will hearken now.

CH. Happy are we, who first shall hear the tale  
 From thine own lips, and tell it to the sea.

DEM. Attend then while I tell.—

—Parting from Hermes hence, anger'd at heart, 730

Self-exiled from the heav'ns, forgone, alone,  
 My anguish fasten'd on me, as I went  
 Wandering an alien in the haunts of men.  
 To screen my woe I put my godhead off,  
 Taking the likeness of a worthy dame,  
 A woman of the people well in years ;  
 Till going unobserv'd, it irked me soon  
 To be unoccupy'd save by my grief,  
 While men might find distraction for their sorrows  
 In useful toil. Then, of my pity rather  
 Than hope to find their simple cure my own,  
 I took resolve to share and serve their needs,  
 And be as one of them.

746

CH. Ah, mighty goddess,  
 Couldst thou so put thy dignities away,  
 And suffer the familiar brunt of men?

DEM. In all things even as they.—And sitting down  
 One evening at Eleusis, by the well  
 Under an olive-tree, likening myself  
 Outwardly to some kindly-hearted matron,  
 Whose wisdom and experience are of worth  
 Either where childhood clamorously speaks  
 The engrossing charge of Aphrodite's gifts,  
 Or merry maidens in wide-echoing halls  
 Want sober governance ;—to me, as there  
 I sat, the daughters of King Keleos came,  
 Tall noble damsels, as kings' daughters are,  
 And, marking me a stranger, they drew from me  
 A tale told so engagingly, that they  
 Grew fain to find employment for my skill ;  
 As men devise in mutual recompense,  
 Hoping the main advantage for themselves ;—  
 And so they bad me follow, and I enter'd  
 The palace of King Keleos, and received  
 There on my knees the youngest of the house,  
 A babe, to nurse him as a mother would :

750

760

And in that menial service I was proud  
To outrun duty and trust: and there I liv'd  
Disguised among the maidens many months.

CH. Often as have our guesses aim'd, dear Lady,  
Where thou didst hide thyself, oft as we wonder'd  
What chosen work was thine, none ever thought  
That thou didst deign to tend a mortal babe. 770

DEM. What life I led shall be for men to tell.  
But for this babe, the nursling of my sorrow,  
Whose peevish cry was my consoling care,  
How much I came to love him ye shall hear.

CH. What was he named, Lady?

DEM. Demophoön.  
Yea, ye shall hear how much I came to love him.  
For in his small epitome I read  
The trouble of mankind; in him I saw 780  
The hero's helplessness, the countless perils  
In ambush of life's promise, the desire  
Blind and instinctive, and the will perverse.  
His petty needs were man's necessities;  
In him I nurst all mortal natur', embrac'd  
With whole affection to my breast, and lull'd  
Wailing humanity upon my knee.

CH. We see thou wilt not now destroy mankind.

DEM. What I could do to save man was my thought.  
And, since my love was center'd in the boy, 790  
My thought was first for him, to rescue him;  
That, thro' my providence, he ne'er should know  
Suffering, nor disease, nor fear of death.  
Therefore I fed him on immortal food,  
And should have gain'd my wish, so well he throve,  
But by ill-chance it hapt, once, as I held him  
Bathed in the fire at midnight (as was my wont),—  
His mother stole upon us, and ascare  
At the strange sight, screaming in loud dismay  
Compel'd me to unmask, and leave for ever 800



The halls of Keleos, and my work undone.

CH. 'Twas pity that she came!—Didst thou not grieve to lose

The small Demophoön?—Coudst thou not save him?

DEM. I had been blinded. Think ye for yourselves . . .  
What vantage were it to mankind at large  
That one should be immortal,—if all beside  
Must die and suffer misery as before?

CH. Nay, truly. And great envy borne to one  
So favour'd might have more embitter'd all.

DEM. I had been foolish. My sojourn with men 810  
Had warpt my mind with mortal tenderness.  
So, questioning myself what real gift  
I might bestow on man to help his state,  
I saw that sorrow was his life-companion,  
To be embrac't bravely, not weakly shun'd ;  
That as by toil man winneth happiness,  
Thro' tribulation he must come to peace.  
How to make sorrow his friend then,—this my task  
Here was a mystery . . . and how persuade  
This thorny truth? . . . Ye do not hearken me. 820

CH. Yea, honour'd goddess, yea, we hearken still :  
Stint not thy tale.

DEM. Ye might not understand.  
My tale to you must be a tale of deeds—  
How first I bade King Keleos build for me  
A temple in Eleusis, and ordain'd  
My worship, and the mysteries of my thought ;  
Where in the sorrow that I underwent  
Man's state is pattern'd ; and in picture shewn  
The way of his salvation. . . . Now with me  
—Here is a matter grateful to your ears— 830  
Your lov'd Persephone hath equal honour,  
And in the spring her festival of flowers :  
And if she should return . . .

[*Listening.*

Ah ! hark ! what hear I ?

CH. We hear no sound.

DEM. Hush ye! Hermes : he comes.

CH. What hearest thou?

DEM. Hermes ; and not alone.

She is there. 'Tis she : I have won.

CH. Where? where?

DEM. (*aside*). Ah! can it be that out of sorrow's night,  
From tears, from yearning pain, from long despair,  
Into joy's sunlight I shall come again?—

Aside! stand ye aside!

840

*Enter Hermes leading Persephone.*

HER. Mighty Demeter, lo! I execute  
The will of Zeus and here restore thy daughter.

DEM. I have won.

PER. Sweet Mother, thy embrace is as the welcome  
Of all the earth, thy kiss the breath of life.

DEM. Ah! but to me, Cora! Thy voice again . . .  
My tongue is trammel'd with excess of joy.

PER. Arise, my nymphs, my Oceanides!  
My Nereids all, arise! and welcome me!

Put off your strange solemnity! arise!

850

CH. Welcome! all welcome, fair Persephone!

(1) We came to welcome thee, but fell abash'd  
Seeing thy purple robe and crystal crown.

PER. Arise and serve my pleasure as of yore.

DEM. And thou too doff thy strange solemnity,  
That all may see thee as thou art, my Cora,  
Restor'd and ever mine. Put off thy crown!

PER. Awhile! dear Mother—what thou say'st is true;  
I am restor'd to thee, and evermore

Shall be restor'd. Yet am I none the less

860

Evermore Queen of Hades : and 'tis meet  
I wear the crown, the symbol of my reign.

DEM. What words are these, my Cora! Evermore  
Restor'd to me thou say'st . . . 'tis well—but then

Evermore Queen of Hades . . . what is this ?  
I had a dark foreboding till I saw thee ;  
Alas, alas ! it lives again : destroy it !  
Solve me this riddle quickly, if thou mayest.

PER. Let Hermes speak, nor fear thou. All is well.

HER. Divine Demeter, thou hast won thy will, 870  
And the command of Zeus have I obey'd.  
Thy daughter is restor'd, and evermore  
Shall be restor'd to thee as on this day.  
But Hades holding to his bride, the Fates  
Were kind also to him, that she should be  
His queen in Hades as thy child on earth.  
Yearly, as spring-tide cometh, she is thine  
While flowers bloom and all the land is gay ;  
But when thy corn is gather'd, and the fields  
Are bare, and earth withdraws her budding life 880  
From the sharp bite of winter's angry fang,  
Yearly will she return and hold her throne  
With great Aidoneus and the living dead :  
And she hath eaten with him of such fruit  
As holds her his true bride for evermore.

DEM. Alas ! alas !

PER. Rejoice, dear Mother. Let not vain lament  
Trouble our joy this day, nor idle tears.

DEM. Alas ! from my own deed my trouble comes :  
He gave thee of the fruit which I had curs'd : 890  
I made the poison that enchanted thee.

PER. Repent not in thy triumph, but rejoice,  
Who hast thy will in all, as I have mine.

DEM. I have but half my will, how hast thou more ?

PER. It was my childish fancy (thou rememb'rest),  
I would be goddess of the flowers : I thought  
That men should innocently honour me  
With bloodless sacrifice and spring-tide joy.  
Now Fate, that look'd contrary, hath fulfill'd  
My project with mysterious efficacy : 900

And as a plant that yearly dieth down  
 When summer is o'er, and hideth in the earth,  
 Nor showeth promise in its wither'd leaves  
 That it shall reawaken and put forth  
 Its blossoms any more to deck the spring ;  
 So I, the mutual symbol of my choice,  
 Shall die with winter, and with spring revive.  
 How without winter could I have my spring ?  
 How come to resurrection without death ?  
 Lo thus our joyful meeting of to-day, 910  
 Born of our separation, shall renew  
 Its annual ecstasy, by grief refresht :  
 And no more pall than doth the joy of spring  
 Yearly returning to the hearts of men.  
 See then the accomplishment of all my hope :  
 Rejoice, and think not to put off my crown.

DEM. What hast thou seen below to reconcile thee  
 To the dark moiety of thy strange fate ?

PER. Where have I been, mother ? what have I seen ?  
 The downward pathway to the gates of death : 920  
 The skeleton of earthly being, stript  
 Of all disguise : the sudden void of night :  
 The spectral records of unwholesome fear :—  
 Why was it given to me to see these things ?  
 The ruin'd godheads, disesteem'd, condemn'd  
 To toil of deathless mockery : conquerors  
 In the reverse of glory, doom'd to rule  
 The multitudinous army of their crimes :  
 The naked retribution of all wrong :—  
 Why was it given to me to see such things ? 930

DEM. Not without terror, as I think, thou speakest,  
 Nor as one reconcil'd to brook return.

PER. But since I have seen these things, with salt and fire  
 My spirit is purged, and by this crystal crown  
 Terror is tamed within me. If my words  
 Seem'd to be tinged with terror, 'twas because

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

Then Psyche would have thank'd their service true,  
But that she fear'd her echoing words might scare  
Those sightless tongues ; and well by dream she knew  
The voices of the messengers of prayer,  
Which fly upon the gods' commandment, when  
They answer the supreme desires of men,  
Or for a while in pity hush their care.

13

'Twas fancy's consummation, and because  
She would do joy no curious despite,  
She made no wonder how the wonder was ;  
Only concern'd to take her full delight.  
So to the bath,—what luxury could be  
Better enhanced by eyeless ministry ?—  
She follows with the voices that invite.

14

There being deliciously refresht, from soil  
Of earth made pure by water, fire, and air,  
They clad her in soft robes of Asian toil,  
Scented, that in her queenly wardrobe were ;  
And led her forth to dine, and all around  
Sang as they served, the while a choral sound  
Of strings unseen and reeds the burden bare.

15

P athetic strains and passionate they wove,  
U rgent in ecstasies of heavenly sense ;  
R esponsive rivalries, that, while they strove  
C ombined in full harmonious suspense,  
E ntrancing wild desire, then fell at last  
L ull'd in soft closes, and with gay contrast  
L aunch'd forth their fresh unwearied excellence.

## *May*

16

Now Psyche, when her twofold feast was o'er,  
Would feed her eye ; and choosing for her guide  
A low-voiced singer, bade her come explore  
The wondrous house ; until on every side  
As surfeited with beauty, and seeing nought  
But what was rich and fair beyond her thought,  
And all her own, thus to the voice she cried :

17

' Am I indeed a goddess, or is this  
But to be dead : and through the gates of death  
Passing unwittingly doth man not miss  
Body nor memory nor living breath ;  
Nor by demerits of his deeds is cast,  
But, paid with the desire he holdeth fast,  
Is holp with all his heart imagineth ? '

18

But her for all reply the wandering tongue  
Call'd to the chamber where her bed was laid  
With flower'd broideries of linen hung :  
And round the walls in painting were portray'd  
Love's victories over the gods renown'd.  
Ares and Aphrodite here lay bound  
In the fine net that dark Hephæstus made :

19

Here Zeus, in likeness of a tawny bull,  
Stoop'd on the Cretan shore his mighty knee,  
While off his back Europa beautiful  
Stept pale against the blue Carpathian sea ;  
And here Apollo, as he caught amazed  
Daphne, for lo ! her hands shot forth upraised  
In leaves, her feet were rooted like a tree :

( 109 )

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

Here Dionysos, springing from his car  
At sight of Ariadne ; here uplept  
Adonis to the chase, breaking the bar  
Of Aphrodite's arm for love who wept :  
He spear in hand, with leashed dogs at strain ;  
A marvellous work. But Psyche soon grown fain  
Of rest, betook her to her bed and slept.

21

Nor long had slept, when at a sudden stir  
She woke ; and one, that thro' the dark made way,  
Drew near, and stood beside ; and over her  
The curtain rustl'd. Trembling now she lay,  
Fainting with terror : till upon her face  
A kiss, and with two gentle arms' embrace,  
A voice that call'd her name in loving play.

22

Though for the darkness she could nothing see,  
She wish'd not then for what the night denied :  
This was the lover she had lack'd, and she,  
Loving his loving, was his willing bride.  
O'erjoy'd she slept again, o'erjoy'd awoke  
At break of morn upon her love to look ;  
When lo ! his empty place lay by her side.

23

So all that day she spent in company  
Of the soft voices ; and ~~Of~~ right, they said,  
~~Art thou our Lady now. Be happily~~  
~~Thy bridal morrow by thy servants sped.~~  
But she but long'd for night, if that might bring  
Her lover back ; and he on secret wing  
Came with the dark, and in the darkness fled.

## May

24

And this was all her life ; for every night  
He came, and though his name she never learn'd,  
Nor was his image yielded to her sight  
At morn or eve, she neither look'd nor yearn'd  
Beyond her happiness : and custom brought  
An ease to pleasure ; nor would Psyche's thought  
Have ever to her earthly home return'd,

25

But that one night he said ' Psyche, my soul,  
Sad danger threatens us : thy sisters twain  
Come to the mountain top, whence I thee stole,  
And thou wilt hear their voices thence complain.  
Answer them not : for it must end our love  
If they should hear or spy thee from above.'  
And Psyche said ' Their cry shall be in vain.'

26

But being again alone, she thought 'twas hard  
On her own blood ; and blamed her joy as thief  
Of theirs, her comfort which their comfort barr'd ;  
When she their care might be their care's relief.  
All day she brooded on her father's woe,  
And when at night her lover kisst her, lo !  
Her tender face was wet with tears of grief.

27

Then question'd why she wept, she all confest ;  
And begg'd of him she might but once go nigh  
To set her sire's and sisters' fears at rest ;  
Till he for pity coud not but comply :  
' Only if they should ask thee of thy love  
Discover nothing to their ears above.'  
And Psyche said ' In vain shall be their cry.'

( III )



## *Eros & Psyche*

28

And yet with day no sooner was alone,  
Than she for loneliness her promise rued:  
That having so much pleasure for her own,  
'Twas all unshared and spent in solitude.  
And when at night her love flew to his place,  
More than afore she shamed his fond embrace,  
And piteously with tears her plaint renew'd.

29

The more he now denied, the more she wept;  
Nor would in anywise be comforted,  
Unless her sisters, on the Zephyr swept,  
Should in those halls be one day bathed and fed,  
And see themselves the palace where she reign'd.  
And he, by force of tears at last constrain'd,  
Granted her wish unwillingly, and said:

30

'Much to our peril hast thou won thy will;  
Thy sisters' love, seeing thee honour'd so,  
Will sour to envy, and with jealous skill  
Will pry to learn the thing that none may know.  
Answer not, nor inquire; for know that I  
The day thou seest my face far hence shall fly,  
And thou anew to bitterest fate must go.'

31

But Psyche said, 'Thy love is more than life;  
To have thee leaveth nothing to be won:  
For should the noonday prove me to be wife  
Even of the beauteous Eros, who is son  
Of Cypris, I could never love thee more.'  
Whereat he fondly kisst her o'er and o'er,  
And peace was 'twixt them till the night was done.

## SECOND QUARTER

### S U M M E R

PSYCHE'S SISTERS • SNARING HER TO DES-  
TRUCTION • ARE THEMSELVES DESTROYED

### JUNE

#### I

AND truly need there was to the old King  
For consolation : since the mournful day  
Of Psyche's fate he took no comforting,  
But only for a speedy death would pray ;  
And on his head his hair grew silver-white.  
—Such on life's topmost bough is sorrow's blight,  
When the stout heart is cankering to decay.

#### 2

Which when his daughters learnt, they both were quick  
Comfort and solace to their sire to lend.  
But as not seldom they who nurse the sick  
Will take the malady from them they tend,  
So happ'd it now ; for they who fail'd to cheer  
Grew sad themselves, and in that palace drear  
Increased the evil that they came to mend.

( 113 )

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

'Didst think he, whom thou madest passion's prince,  
No privy dart then for himself would poise?  
Nay, by the cuckoo on my sceptre, since  
'Twas love that made thee mother of his joys,  
Art thou the foremost to his favour bound;  
As thou shouldst be the last to think to sound  
The heart, and least of all thy wanton boy's.'

28

But her Demeter, on whose stalwart arm  
She lean'd, took up: 'If thou wilt hark to me,  
This Psyche,' said she, 'hath the heavenly charm,  
And will become immortal. And maybe  
To marry with a woman is as well  
As wed a god and live below in Hell:  
As 'twas my lot in child of mine to see.'

29

Which things they both said, fearing in their hearts  
That savage Eros, if they mockt his case,  
Would kill their peace with his revengeful darts,  
And bring them haply to a worse disgrace:  
But Aphrodite, saying 'Good! my dames;  
Behind this smoke I see the spite that flames,'  
Left them, and on her journey went apace.

30

For having purposed she would hold no truce  
With Psyche or her son, 'twas in her mind  
To go forthwith unto the throne of Zeus,  
And beg that Hermes might be sent to find  
The wanderer; and secure that in such quest  
He would not fail, she ponder'd but how best  
She might inflict her vengeance long-design'd.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## OCTOBER

### I

HEAVY meanwhile at heart, with bruised feet  
Was Psyche wandering many nights and days  
Upon the paths of hundred-citied Crete,  
And chose to step the most deserted ways ;  
Being least unhappy when she went unseen ;  
Since else her secret sorrow had no screen  
From the plain question of men's idle gaze.

### 2

Yet wheresoe'er she went one hope she had ;  
Like mortal mourners, who 'gainst reason strong  
Hope to be unexpectedly made glad  
With sight of their dead friends, so much they long ;  
So she for him, whom loss a thousandfold  
Endear'd and made desired ; nor could she hold  
He would not turn and quite forgive her wrong.

### 3

Wherefore her eager eyes in every place  
Lookt for her lover ; and 'twixt hope and fear  
She follow'd oft afar some form of grace,  
In pain alike to lose or venture near.  
And still this thought cheer'd her fatigue, that he,  
Or on some hill, or by some brook or tree,  
But waited for her coming to appear.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 4

And then for comfort many an old love-crost  
And doleful ditty would she gently sing,  
Writ by sad poets of a lover lost,  
Now sounding sweeter for her sorrowing :  
*Echo, sweet Echo, watching up on high,*  
*Say hast thou seen to-day my love go by,*  
*Or where thou sittest by thy mossy spring?*

### 5

*Or say ye nymphs, that from the crystal rills,*  
*When ye have bathed your limbs from morn till eve,*  
*Flying at midnight to the bare-topt hills,*  
*Beneath the stars your mazy dances weave,*  
*Say, my deserter whom ye well may know*  
*By his small wings, his quiver, and his bow,*  
*Say, have ye seen my love, whose loss I grieve?*

### 6

Till climb'd one evening on a rocky steep  
Above the plain of Cisamos, that lay,  
Robb'd of its golden harvest, in the deep  
Mountainous shadows of the dying day,  
She saw a temple, whose tall columns fair  
Recall'd her home ; and ' O if thou be there,  
My love,' she cried, ' fly not again away.'

### 7

Swiftly she ran, and entering by the door  
She stood alone within an empty fane  
Of great Demeter : and, behold, the floor  
Was litter'd with thank-offerings of grain,  
With wheat and barley-sheaves together heapt  
In holy harvest-home of them that reap  
The goddess plenteous gifts upon the plain ;

## October

### 8

And on the tithe the tackle of the tithe  
Thrown by in such confusion, as are laid  
Upon the swath sickle, and hook, and scythe,  
When midday drives the reapers to the shade.  
And Psyche, since had come no priestess there  
To trim the temple, in her pious care  
Forgot herself, and lent her duteous aid.

### 9

She drew the offerings from the midst aside,  
And piled the sheaves at every pillar's base ;  
And sweeping therebetween a passage wide,  
Made clear of corn and chaff the temple space :  
As countrymen who bring their wheat to mart,  
Set out their show along the walls apart  
By their allotted stations, each in place ;

### 10

Thus she, and felt no weariness,—such strength  
Hath duty to support our feeble frame,—  
Till all was set in order, and at length  
Up to the threshold of the shrine she came :  
When lo ! before her face with friendly smile,  
Tall as a pillar of the peristyle,  
The goddess stood reveal'd, and call'd her name.

### 11

'Unhappy Psyche,' said she, 'know'st thou not  
How Aphrodite to thy hurt is sworn ?  
And thou, thy peril and her wrath forgot,  
Spendest thy thought my temple to adorn.  
Take better heed !'—And Psyche, at the voice  
Even of so little comfort, gan rejoice,  
And at her feet pour'd out this prayer forlorn.

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

‘O Gracious giver of the golden grain,  
Hide me, I pray thee, from her wrath unkind ;  
For who can pity as canst thou my pain,  
Who wert thyself a wanderer, vex’d in mind  
For loss of thy dear Corè once, whenas,  
Ravisht to hell by fierce Agesilas,  
Thou soughtest her on earth and couldst not find.

13

‘How could thy feet bear thee to western night,  
And where swart Libyans watch the sacred tree,  
And thrice to ford o’er Achelous bright,  
And all the streams of beauteous Sicily ?  
And thrice to Enna cam’st thou, thrice, they tell,  
Satest athirst by Callichorus’ well,  
Nor tookest of the spring to comfort thee.

14

‘By that remember’d anguish of thine heart,  
Lady, have pity even on me, and show  
Where I may find my love ; and take my part  
For peace, I pray, against my cruel foe :  
Or if thou canst not from her anger shield,  
Here let me lie among the sheaves conceal’d  
Such time till forth I may in safety go.’

15

Demeter answer’d, ‘Nay, though thou constrain  
My favour with thy plea, my help must still  
Be hidden, else I work for thee in vain  
To thwart my mighty sister in her will.  
Thou must fly hence : Yet though I not oppose,  
Less will I aid her ; and if now I close  
My temple doors to thee, take it not ill.’

## October

16

Then Psyche's hope founder'd ; as when a ship,  
The morrow of the gale can hardly ride  
The swollen seas, fetching a deeper dip  
At every wave, and through her gaping side  
And o'er her shattered bulwark ever drinks,  
Till plunging in the watery wild she sinks,  
To scoop her grave beneath the crushing tide :

17

So with each word her broken spirit drank  
Its doom ; and overwhelm'd with deep despair  
She turn'd away, and coming forth she sank  
Silently weeping on the temple stair,  
In midmost night, forspent with long turmoil :  
But sleep, the gracious pursuivant of toil,  
Came swiftly down, and nursed away her care.

18

And when the sun awaked her with his beams  
She found new hope, that still her sorrow's cure  
Lay with the gods, who in her morning dreams  
Had sent her comfort in a vision sure ;  
Wherein the Cretan-born, almightiest god,  
Cloud-gathering Zeus himself had seem'd to nod,  
And bid her with good heart her woes endure.

19

So coming that same day unto a shrine  
Of Hera, she took courage and went in :  
And like to one that to the cell divine  
For favour ventures or a suit to win,  
She drew anigh the altar, from her face  
Wiping the tears, ere to the heavenly grace,  
As thus she pray'd, she would her prayer begin.

( 149 )



## *Eros & Psyche*

20

'Most honour'd Lady, who from ancient doom  
Wert made heaven's wife, and art on earth besought  
With gracious happiness of all to whom  
Thy holy wedlock hath my burden brought,  
Save me from Aphrodite's fell pursuit,  
And guard unto the birth Love's hapless fruit,  
Which she for cruel spite would bring to nought.

21

'As once from her thou wert not shamed to take  
Her beauty's zone, thy beauty to enhance ;  
For which again Zeus loved thee, to forsake  
His warlike ire in faithful dalliance ;  
Show me what means may win my Love to me,  
Or how that I may come, if so may be,  
Within the favour of his countenance.

22

'If there be any place for tears or prayer,  
If there be need for succour in distress,  
Now is the very hour of all despair,  
Here is the heart of grief and bitterness.  
Motherly pity, bend thy face and grant  
One beam of ruth to thy poor suppliant,  
Nor turn me from thine altar comfortless.'

23

Even as she pray'd a cloud spread through the cell,  
And 'mid the wreathings of the vapour dim  
The goddess grew in glory visible,  
Like some barbaric queen in festal trim ;  
Such the attire and ornaments she wore,  
When o'er the forged threshold of the floor  
Of Zeus's house she stept to visit him.

## October

24

From either ear, ring'd to its piercèd lobe  
A triple jewel hung, with gold enchas't ;  
And o'er her breasts her wide ambrosial robe  
With many a shining golden clasp was brac't ;  
The flowering on its smooth embroider'd lawn  
Gather'd to colour where the zone was drawn  
In fringe of golden tassels at her waist.

25

Her curling hair with plaited braid and braid,  
Pendant or loop'd about her head divine,  
Lay hidden half beneath a golden veil,  
Bright as the rippling ocean in sunshine :  
And on the ground, flashing whene'er she stept,  
Beneath her feet the dazzling lightnings lept  
From the gold network of her sandals fine.

26

Thus Hera stood in royal guise bedeck't  
Before poor Psyche on the stair that knelt,  
Whose new-nursed hope at that display was check't  
And all her happier thoughts gan fade and melt.  
She saw no kindness in such haughty mien,  
And venturing not to look upon the queen,  
Bow'd down in woe to hear her sentence dealt.

27

And thus the goddess spake, 'In vain thou suest,  
Most miserable Psyche ; though my heart  
Be full of hate for her whose hate thou ruest,  
And pride and pity move me to thy part :  
Yet not till Zeus make known his will, coud I,  
Least of the blameless gods that dwell on high,  
Assist thee, wert thou worthier than thou art.

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

‘But know if Eros love thee, that thy hopes  
Should rest on him ; and I would bid thee go  
Where in his mother’s house apart he mopes  
Grieving for loss of thee in secret woe :  
For should he take thee back, there is no power  
In earth or heaven will hurt thee from that hour,  
Nay, not if Zeus himself should prove thy foe.’

29

Thus saying she was gone, and Psyche now  
Surprised by comfort rose and went her way,  
Resolved in heart, and only wondering how  
’Twas possible to come where Eros lay ;  
Since that her feet, however she might roam,  
Coud never travel to the heavenly home  
Of Love, beyond the bounds of mortal day :

30

Yet must she come to him. And now ’twas proved  
How that to Lovers, as is told in song,  
Seeking the way no place is far removed ;  
Nor is there any obstacle so strong,  
Nor bar so fix’d that it can hinder them :  
And how to reach heaven’s gate by stratagem  
Vex’d not the venturous heart of Psyche long.

31

To face her enemy might well avail :  
Wherefore to Cypris’ shrine her steps she bent,  
Hoping the goddess in her hate might hale  
Her body to the skies for punishment,  
Whate’er to be ; yet now her fiercest wrath  
Seem’d happiest fortune, seeing ’twas the path  
Whereby alone unto her love she went.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## NOVEMBER

### I

BUT Aphrodite to the house of Zeus  
Being bound, bade beckon out her milkwhite steeds,  
Four doves, that ready to her royal use  
In golden cages stood and peck'd the seeds :  
Best of the nimble air's high-sailing folk  
That wore with pride the marking of her yoke,  
And cooed in envy of her gentle needs.

### 2

These drew in turn her chariot, when in state  
Along the heaven with all her train she fared ;  
And oft in journeying to the skiey gate  
Of Zeus's palace high their flight had dared,  
Which darkest vapour and thick glooms enshroud  
Above all else in the perpetual cloud,  
Wherethro' to mount again they stood prepared,

### 3

Sleeking their feathers, by her shining car ;  
The same Hephæstos wrought for her, when he,  
Bruised in his hideous fall from heaven afar,  
Was nursed by Thetis, and Eurynomè,  
The daughter of the ever-refluent main ;  
With whom he dwelt till he grew sound again,  
Down in a hollow cave beside the sea :

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 4

And them for kindness done was prompt to serve,  
Forging them brooches rich in make and mode,  
Earrings, and supple chains of jointed curve,  
And other trinkets, while he there abode :  
And none of gods or men knew of his home,  
But they two only ; and the salt sea-foam  
To and fro past his cavern ever flow'd.

### 5

'Twas then he wrought this work within the cave,  
Emboss'd with rich design, a moonèd car ;  
And when return'd to heaven to Venus gave,  
In form imagined like her crescent star ;  
Which circling nearest earth, maketh at night  
To wakeful mortal men shadow and light  
Alone of all the stars in heaven that are.

### 6

Two slender wheels it had, with fretted tires  
Of biting adamant, to take firm hold  
Of cloud or ether ; and their whirling fires  
Threw off the air in halo where they roll'd :  
And either nave that round the axle turn'd  
A ruby was, whose steady crimson burn'd  
Betwixt the twin speed-mingling fans of gold.

### 7

Thereon the naked goddess mounting, shook  
The reins ; whereat the doves their wings outspread,  
And rising high their flight to heaven they took :  
And all the birds, that in those courts were bred,  
Of her broad eaves the nested families,  
Sparrows and swallows, join'd their companies  
Awhile and twitter'd to her overhead.

## *November*

8

But onward she with fading tracks of flame  
Sped swiftly, till she reacht her journey's end :  
And when within the house of Zeus she came,  
She pray'd the Sire of Heaven that he would lend  
Hermes, the Argus-slayer, for her hest ;  
And he being granted her at her request,  
She went forthwith to seek him and to send.

9

Who happ'd within the palace then to wait  
Upon the almighty pleasure ; and her tale  
Was quickly told, and he made answer straight  
That he would find the truant without fail ;  
Asking the goddess by what signs her slave  
Might best be known, and what the price she gave  
For capture, or admitted for the bail.

10

All which he took his silver stile to write  
In letters large upon a waxèd board ;  
Her age and name, her colour, face and height,  
Her home, and parentage, and the reward :  
And then read o'er as 'twas to be proclaim'd.  
And she took oath to give the price she named,  
Without demur, when Psyche was restored.

11

Then on his head he closely set his cap  
With earèd wings erect, and o'er his knee  
He cross'd each foot in turn to prove the strap  
That bound his wingèd sandals, and shook free  
His chlamys, and gat up, and in his hand  
Taking his fair white-ribbon'd herald's wand,  
Lept forth on air, accoutred cap-a-pè.

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

And piloting along the mid-day sky,  
Held southward, till the narrow map of Crete  
Lay like a fleck in azure 'neath his eye ;  
When down he came, and as an eagle fleet  
Drops in some combe, then checks his headlong stoop  
With wide-flung wing, wheeling in level swoop  
To strike the bleating quarry with his feet,

13

Thus he alighted ; and in every town  
In all the isle before the close of day  
Had cried the message, which he carried down,  
Of Psyche, Aphrodite's runaway ;  
That whosoever found the same and caught,  
And by such time unto her temple brought,  
To him the goddess would this guerdon pay :

14

SIX HONIED KISSES FROM HER ROSY MOUTH  
WOULD CYTHEREA GIVE, AND ONE BESIDE  
TO QUENCH AT HEART FOR AYE LOVE'S MORTAL DROUTH :  
BUT UNTO HIM THAT HID HER, WOE BETIDE !  
Which now was on all tongues, and Psyche's name  
Herself o'erheard, or ever nigh she came  
To Aphrodite's temple where she hied.

15

When since she found her way to heaven was safe,  
She only wisht to make it soon and sure ;  
Nor fear'd to meet the goddess in her chafe,  
So she her self-surrender might secure,  
And not be given of other for the price ;  
Nor was there need of any artifice  
Her once resplendent beauty to obscure.

## November

16

For now so changed she was by heavy woe,  
That for the little likeness that she bore  
To her description she was fear'd to go  
Within the fane ; and when she stood before  
The priestess, scarce could she with oath persuade  
That she was Psyche, the renownèd maid,  
Whom men had left the temple to adore.

17

But when to Hermes she was shown and given,  
He took no doubt, but eager to be quit,  
And proud of speed, return'd with her to heaven,  
And left her with the proclamation writ,  
Hung at her neck, the board with letters large,  
At Aphrodite's gate with those in charge ;  
And up whence first he came made haste to flit.

18

But hapless Psyche fell, for so it chanced,  
To moody SYNETHA's care, the one  
Of Aphrodite's train whom she advanced  
To try the work abandon'd by her son.  
Who by perpetual presence made ill end  
Of good or bad ; though she could both amend,  
And merit praise for work by her begun.

19

But she to better thought her heart had shut,  
And proved she had a spite beyond compare :  
Nor could the keenest taunts her anger glut,  
Which she when sour'd was never wont to spare :  
And now she mock'd at Psyche's shame and grief,  
As only she might do, and to her chief  
Along the courtyard dragg'd her by the hair.

( 157 )



## *Eros & Psyche*

20

Nor now was Aphrodite kinder grown :  
Having her hated rival in her power,  
She laught for joy, and in triumphant tone  
Bade her a merry welcome to her bower :  
'Tis fit indeed daughters-in-law should wait  
Upon their mothers ; but thou comest late,  
Psyche ; I lookt for thee before this hour.

21

'And yet,' thus gave she rein to jeer and gibe,  
'Forgive me if I held thee negligent,  
Or if accustom'd vanity ascribe  
An honour to myself that was not meant.  
Thy lover is it, who so dearly prized  
The pretty soul, then left her and despised ?  
To him more like thy heavenward steps were bent :

22

'Nor without reason : Zeus, I tell thee, swoon'd  
To hear the story of the drop of oil,  
The revelation and the ghastly wound :  
My merriment is but my fear's recoil.  
But if my son was unkind, thou shalt see  
How kind a goddess can his mother be  
To bring thy tainted honour clear of soil.'

23

And so, to match her promise with her mirth,  
Two of her ministers she call'd in ken,  
That work the melancholy of the earth ;  
MERIMNA that with care perplexes, when  
The hearts of mortals have the gods forgot,  
And LYPÈ, that her sorrow spares them not,  
When mortals have forgot their fellow men.

## November

24

These, like twin sharks that in a fair ship's wake  
Swim constant, showing 'bove the water blue  
Their shearing fins, and hasty ravin make  
Of overthrow or offal, so these two  
On Aphrodite's passing follow hard ;  
And now she offer'd to their glut's regard  
Sweet Psyche, with command their wont to do.

25

But in what secret chamber their foul task  
These soul-tormentors plied, or what their skill,  
Pity of tender nature may not ask,  
Nor poet stain his rhyme with such an ill.  
But they at last themselves turn'd from their rack,  
Weary of cruelty, and led her back,  
Saying that further torture were to kill.

26

Then when the goddess saw her, more she mockt  
'Art thou the woman of the earth,' she said,  
'That hast in sorceries mine Eros lockt,  
And stood thyself for worship in my stead?  
Looking that I should pity thee, or care  
For what illicit offspring thou may'st bear;  
Or let thee to that god my son be wed?

27

'I know thy trick ; and thou art one of them  
Who steal love's favour in the gentle way,  
Wearing submission for a diadem,  
Patience and suffering for thy rich array :  
Thou wilt be modest, kind, implicit, so  
To rest thy wily spirit out of show  
That it may leap the livelier into play :

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

·Devout at doing nothing, if so be  
The grace become thee well ; but active yet  
Above all others be there none to see  
Thy business, and thine eager face asweat.  
Lo ! I will prove thy talent : thou may'st live,  
And all that thou desirest will I give,  
If thou perform the task which I shall set.'

29

She took her then aside, and bade her heed  
A heap of grains piled high upon the floor,  
Millet and mustard, hemp and poppy seed,  
And fern-bloom's undistinguishable spore,  
All kinds of pulse, of grasses, and of spice,  
Clover and linseed, rape, and corn, and rice,  
Dodder, and sesame, and many more.

30

'Sort me these seeds' she said ; 'it now is night.  
I will return at morning ; if I find  
That thou hast separated all aright,  
Each grain from other grain after its kind,  
And set them in unmingl'd heaps apart,  
Then shall thy wish be granted to thine heart.  
Whereat she turn'd, and closed the door behind.

## FOURTH QUARTER

### W I N T E R

#### PSYCHE'S TRIALS AND RECEPTION INTO HEAVEN

### DECEMBER

#### I

A SINGLE lamp there stood beside the heap,  
And shed thereon its mocking golden light;  
Such as might tempt the weary eye to sleep  
Rather than prick the nerve of taskèd sight.  
Yet Psyche, not to fail for lack of zeal,  
With good will sat her down to her ordeal,  
Sorting the larger seeds as best she might.

#### 2

When lo ! upon the wall, a shadow past  
Of doubtful shape, across the chamber dim  
Moving with speed : and seeing nought that cast  
The shade, she bent her down the flame to trim :  
And there the beast itself, a little ant,  
Climb'd up in compass of the lustre scant,  
Upon the bowl of oil ran round the rim.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

Smiling to see the creature of her fear  
So dwarf'd by truth, she watcht him where he crept,  
For mere distraction telling in his ear  
What straits she then was in, and telling wept.  
Whereat he stood and trim'd his horns ; but ere  
Her tale was done resumed his manner scare,  
Ran down, and on his way in darkness kept.

### 4

But she intent drew forth with dextrous hand  
The larger seeds, or push'd the smaller back,  
Or light from heavy with her breathing fan'd.  
When suddenly she saw the floor grow black,  
And troops of ants, flowing in noiseless train,  
Moved to the hill of seeds, as o'er a plain  
Armies approach a city for attack ;

### 5

And gathering on the grain, began to strive  
With grappling horns : and each from out the heap  
His burden drew, and all their motion live  
Struggled and slid upon the surface steep.  
And Psyche wonder'd, watching them, to find  
The creatures separated kind from kind :  
Till dizzied with the sight she fell asleep.

### 6

And when she woke 'twas with the morning sound  
Of Aphrodite's anger at the door,  
Whom high amaze stay'd backward, as she found  
Her foe asleep with all her trouble o'er :  
And round the room beheld, in order due,  
The piles arranged distinct and sorted true,  
Grain with grain, seed with seed, and spore with spore.

## *December*

### 7

She fiercely cried 'Thou shalt not thus escape;  
For to this marvel dar'st thou not pretend.  
There is but one that could this order shape,  
Demeter,—but I knew her not thy friend.  
Therefore another trial will I set,  
In which she cannot aid thee nor abet,  
But thou thyself must bring it fair to end.'

### 8

Thereon she sped her to the bounds of Thrace,  
And set her by a river deep and wide,  
And said 'To east beyond this stream, a race  
Of golden-fleeced sheep at pasture bide.  
Go seek them out; and this thy task, to pull  
But one lock for me of their precious wool,  
And give it in my hands at eventide:

### 9

'This do and thou shalt have thy heart's desire.'  
Which said, she fled and left her by the stream:  
And Psyche then, with courage still entire,  
Had plunged therein; but now of great esteem  
Her life she rated, while it lent a spell  
Wherein she yet might hope to quit her well,  
And in one winning all her woes redeem.

### 10

There as she stood in doubt, a fluting voice  
Rose from the flood, 'Psyche, be not afraid  
To hear a reed give tongue, for 'twas of choice  
That I from mortal flesh a plant was made.  
My name is Syrinx; once from mighty Pan  
Into the drowning river as I ran,  
A fearful prayer my steps for ever stay'd.

## *Eros & Psyche*

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## *Eros & Psyche*

### 11

'But by that change in many climes I live :  
And Pan, my lover, who to me alone  
Is true and does me honour, I forgive—  
Nor if I speak in sorrow is't my own :  
Rather for thee my voice I now uplift  
To warn thee plunge not in the river swift,  
Nor seek the golden sheep to men unknown.

### 12

'If thou should cross the stream, which may not be,  
Thou couldst not climb upon the hanging rocks,  
Nor ever, as the goddess bade thee, see  
The pasture of the yellow-fleccèd flocks :  
Or if thou could, their herded horns would gore  
And slay thee on the crags, or thrust thee o'er  
Ere thou couldst rob them of their golden locks.

### 13

'The goddess means thy death. But I can show  
How thy obedience yet may thwart her will.  
At noon the golden flocks descend below,  
Leaving the scented herbage of the hill,  
And where the shelving banks to shallows fall,  
Drink at the rippling water one and all,  
Nor back return till they have drawn their fill.

### 14

'I will command a thornbush, that it stoop  
Over some ram that steppeth by in peace.  
And him in all its prickles firmly coop,  
Making thee seizure of his golden fleece :  
So without peril of his angry horns  
Shalt thou be quit : for he upon the thorns  
Must leave his ransom ere he win release.'

## *December*

15

Then Psyche thank't her for her kind befriending,  
And hid among the rushes looking east ;  
And when noon came she saw the flock descending  
Out of the hills ; and lo ! one golden beast  
Caught in a thornbush ; and the mighty brute  
Struggl'd and tore it from its twisted root  
Into the stream, or e'er he was releas't.

16

And when they water'd were and gone, the breeze  
Floated the freighted thorn where Psyche lay :  
Whence she unhook'd the golden wool at ease,  
And back to heaven for passage swift gan pray.  
And Hermes, who was sent to be her guide  
Ifso she lived, came down at eventide,  
And bore her thither ere the close of day.

17

But when the goddess saw the locks of gold  
Held to her hands, her heart with wrath o'erran :  
'Most desperate thou, and by abetting bold,  
That dost outwit me, prove thee as I can.  
Yet this work is not thine : there is but one  
Of all the gods who coud the thing have done.  
Hast thou a friend too in the lusty Pan ?

18

'I'll give thee trial where he cannot aid.'

Which said, she led her to a torrid land,  
Level and black, but not with flood or shade,  
For nothing coud the mighty heat withstand,  
Which aye from morn till eve the naked sun  
Pour'd on that plain, where never foot had run,  
Nor any herb sprung on its molten sand.

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

Far off a gloomy mountain rose alone :  
And Aphrodite, thither pointing, said  
' There lies thy task. Out of the topmost stone  
Of yonder hill upwells a fountain head.  
Take thou this goblet ; brimming must thou bring  
Its cup with water from that sacred spring,  
If ever to my son thou wouldst be wed.'

20

Saying, she gave into her hands a bowl  
Cut of one crystal, open, broad and fair ;  
And bade her at all hazard keep it whole,  
For heaven held nought beside so fine or rare.  
Then was she gone ; and Psyche on the plain  
Now doubted if she ever should regain  
The love of Eros, strove she howsoe'er.

21

Yet as a helmsman, at the word to tack,  
Swiftly without a thought puts down his helm,  
So Psyche turn'd to tread that desert black,  
Since was no fear that could her heart o'erwhelm ;  
Nor knew she that she went the fount to seek  
Of cold Cocytus, springing to the peak,  
Secretly from his source in Pluto's realm.

22

All night and day she journey'd, and at last  
Come to the rock gazed up in vain around :  
Nothing she saw but precipices vast  
O'er ruined scarps, with rugged ridges crown'd :  
And creeping to a cleft to rest in shade,  
Or e'er the desperate venture she assay'd,  
She fell asleep upon the stony ground.

## December

23

A dream came to her, thus : she stood alone  
Within her palace in the high ravine ;  
Where nought but she was changed, but she to stone.  
Worshippers throng'd the court, and still were seen  
Folk flying from the peak, who, ever more  
Flying and flying, lighted on the floor,  
*Hail !* cried they, *wife of Eros, adorèd queen !*

24

A hurtling of the battl'd air disturb'd  
Her sunken sense, and waked her eyes to meet  
The kingly bird of Zeus, himself that curb'd  
His swooping course, alighting at her feet ;  
With motion gentle, his far-darting eye  
In kindness dim'd upon her, he drew nigh,  
And thus in words unveil'd her foe's deceit :

25

' In vain, poor Psyche, hast thou hither striven  
Across the fiery plain toiling so well ;  
Cruelly to destruction art thou driven  
By her, whose hate thou canst not quit nor quell  
No mortal foot may scale this horrid mount,  
And those black waters of its topmost fount  
Are guarded by the hornèd snakes of hell.

26

' Its little rill is an upleaping jet  
Of cold Cocytus, which for ever licks  
Earth's base, and when with Acheron 'tis met,  
Its waters with that other cannot mix,  
Which holds the elemental air dissolved ;  
But with it in its ceaseless course revolved  
Issues unmingl'd in the lake of Styx.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

'The souls of murderers, in guise of fish,  
Scream as they swim therein and wail for cold,  
Their times of woe determined by the wish  
Of them they murder'd on the earth of old :  
Whom each five years they see, whene'er they make  
Their passage to the Acherusian lake,  
And there release may win from pains condoled.

28

'For if the pitying ear of them they slew  
Be haply piercèd by their voices spare,  
Then are they freed from pain ; as are some few ;  
But, for the most, again they forward fare  
To Tartarus obscene, and outcast thence  
Are hurried back into the cold intense,  
And with new company their torments share.

29

'Its biting lymph may not be touch'd of man  
Or god, unless the Fates have so ordain'd ;  
Nor coud I in thy favour break the ban,  
Nor pass the dragons that thereby are chain'd,  
Didst thou not bear the sacred cup of Zeus ;  
Which, for thy peril lent, shall turn to use,  
And truly do the service which it feign'd.'

30

Thus as he spake, his talons made he ring  
Around the crystal bowl, and soaring high  
Descended as from heaven upon the spring :  
Nor dared the hornèd snakes of hell deny  
The minister of Zeus, that bore his cup,  
To fill it with their trusted water up,  
Thence to the King of heaven therewith to fly.

## *December*

31

But he to Psyche bent his gracious speed,  
And bidding her to mount his feather'd back  
Bore her aloft as once young Ganymede ;  
Nor ever made his steady flight to slack,  
Ere that he set her down beside her goal,  
And gave into her hands the crystal bowl  
Unspill'd, o'erbrimming with the water black.

## JANUARY

I

BUT Eros now recover'd from his hurt,  
Felt other pangs ; for who would not relent  
Weighing the small crime and unmatch'd desert  
Of Psyche with her cruel punishment ?  
And shamed he grew to be so near allied  
To her, who by her taunts awoke his pride,  
As his compassion by her spite unspen.

2

Which Aphrodite seeing, wax'd more firm  
That he should never meet with Psyche more ;  
And had in thought already set the term  
To their communion with that trial sore,  
Which sent her forth upon a quest accurst,  
And not to be accomplisht, that of thirst  
She there might perish on hell's torrid shore.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

And now it chanced that she had called her son  
Into her presence-chamber, to unfold  
Psyche's destruction, that her fate might stun  
What love remained by duty uncontrol'd;  
And he to hide his tears' rebellious storm  
Was fled; when in his place another form  
Rose 'neath the golden lintel; and behold

### 4

Psyche herself, in slow and balanced strain,  
Poising the crystal bowl with fearful heed,  
Her eyes at watch upon the steadied plane,  
And whole soul gather'd in the single deed.  
Onward she came, and stooping to the floor  
Set down the cup unspill'd and brimming o'er  
At Aphrodite's feet, and rose up freed.

### 5

Surprise o'ercame the goddess, and she too  
Stood like a statue, but with passion pale:  
Till, when her victim nothing spake, she threw  
Some kindness in her voice, and bade her hail;  
But in the smiling judge 'twas plain to see—  
Saying 'What water bringst thou here to me?'—  
That justice over hate should not prevail.

### 6

Then Psyche said 'This is the biting flood  
Of black Cocytus, silver'd with the gleam  
Of souls, that guilty of another's blood  
Are pent therein, and as they swim they scream.  
The hornèd snakes of hell, upon the mount  
Enchain'd, for ever guard the livid fount:  
And but the Fates can grant to touch the stream.'

## January

7

‘Wherefore,’ the goddess cried, ‘’tis plain that none  
But one I wot of coud this thing have wrought.  
That which another doth may well be done,  
Nor thou the nearer to my promise brought.  
Thou buildest on a hope to be destroy’d,  
If thou accept conditions, and avoid  
Thy parcel, nor thyself accomplish aught.

8

‘Was it not kindness in me, being averse  
To all thy wish, to yield me thus to grant  
Thy heart’s desire,—and nothing loathe I worse,—  
If thou wouldst only work as well as want?  
See, now I will not yet be all denial,  
But offer thee one last determining trial:  
And let it be a mutual covenant:

9

‘This box,’ and in her hands she took a pyx  
Square-cut, of dark obsidian’s rarest green,  
‘Take; and therewith beyond Tartarean Styx  
Go thou, and entering Hades’ house obscene,  
Say to Persephonè, *If ’tis thy will*  
*To shew me so much favour, prithee fill*  
*This little vase with beauty for Love’s queen.*

10

‘*She begs but what shall well o’erlast a day;*  
*For of her own was much of late outspent*  
*In nursing of her son, in bed who lay*  
*Wounded by me, who for the gift am sent.*  
Then bring me what she gives, and with all speed;  
For truth to say I stand, thou seest, in need  
Of some such charm in my disparagement.

( 171 )



## *Eros & Psyche*

11

'If thou return to me with that acquist,  
Having thyself the journey made, I swear  
That day to give thee whatsoe'er thou list,  
An be it my son. Now, Psyche, wilt thou dare?'  
And Psyche said 'If this thou truly mean,  
I will go down to Tartarus obscene,  
And beg of Hades' queen thy beauty there.

12

'Show me the way.' But Aphrodite said,  
'That may'st thou find. Yet I will place thee whence  
A way there is : mortals have on it sped ;  
Ay, and return'd thereby : so let us hence.'  
Then swift to earth her willing prey she bore,  
And left her on the wide Laconian shore,  
Alone, at midnight, in the darkness dense.

13

'Twas winter ; and as shivering Psyche sat  
Waiting for morn, she question'd in her mind  
What place the goddess meant, arrived whereat  
She might descend to hell, or how should find  
The way which Gods to living men deny.  
'No Orpheus, nay, nor Hercules am I,'  
Said she, 'to loosen where the great Gods bind.'

14

And when at length the long-delaying dawn  
Broke on the peaks of huge Taygetus,  
And Psyche through the skirts of dark withdrawn  
Look'd on that promontory mountainous,  
And saw high-crested Taleton in snow,  
Her heart sank, and she wept with head bent low  
The malice of her foe dispiteous.

## January

15

And seeing near at hand an ancient tower,  
Deserted now, but once a hold of men,  
She came thereto, and, though 'twas all her power,  
Mounted its steep unbroken stair again.  
' Surely,' she said, for now a second time  
She thought to die—'this little height I climb  
Will prove my shortest road to Pluto's den.

16

'Hence must I come to Tartarus ; once there  
Turn as I may,' and straight to death had sprung ;  
When in the mossy tower the imprison'd air  
Was shaken, and the hoary stones gave tongue,  
'Stand firm ! Stand firm !' that rugged voice outcried ;  
'Of such as choose despondency for guide  
Hast thou not heard what bitterest fate is sung ?

17

'Hearken ; for I the road and means can teach  
How thou may'st come to hell and yet escape.  
And first must thou, that upper gate to reach,  
Along these seagirt hills thy journey shape,  
To where the land in sea dips furthest South  
At Tænarus and Hades' earthly mouth,  
Hard by Poseidon's temple at the cape.

18

'Thereby may one descend : but they that make  
That passage down must go provided well.  
So take in either hand a honey-cake  
Of pearlèd barley mix'd with hydromel ;  
And in thy mouth two doits, first having bound  
The pyx beneath thy robe enwrap'd around :  
Thus set thou forth ; and mark what more I tell.

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

‘When thou hast gone alone some half thy road  
Thou wilt o’ertake a lame outwearied ass ;  
And one that beats him, tottering ’neath his load  
Of loosely bundl’d wood, will cry *Alas ;*  
*Help me, kind friend, my faggots to adjust !*  
But thou that silly cripple’s words mistrust ;  
’Tis planted for thy death. Note it and pass.

20

‘And when thy road the Stygian river joins,  
Where woolly Charon ferries o’er the dead,  
He will demand his fare : one of thy coins  
Force with thy tongue between thy teeth, thy head  
Offering instead of hand to give the doit.  
His fingers in this custom are adroit,  
And thine must not set down the barleybread.

21

Then in his crazy bark as, ferrying o’er  
The stream, thou sittest, one that seems to float  
Rather than swim, midway ’twixt shore and shore,  
Will stretch his fleshless hand upon the boat,  
And beg thee of thy pity take him in.  
Shut thy soft ear unto his clamour thin,  
Nor for a phantom deed thyself devote.

22

‘Next, on the further bank when thou art stept,  
Three wizen’d women weaving at the woof  
Will stop, and pray thee in their art adept  
To free their tangl’d threads. Hold thou aloof ;  
For this and other traps thy foe hath plan’d  
To make thee drop the cakes out of thy hand,  
Putting thy prudence to perpetual proof.

## January

23

‘For by one cake thou comest into Hell,  
And by one cake departest ; since the hound  
That guards the gate is ever pleasèd well  
To taste man’s meal, or sweeten’d grain unground.  
Cast him a cake ; for that thou may’st go free  
Even to the mansion of Persephonè,  
Withouten stay or peril, safe and sound.

24

‘She will receive thee kindly ; thou decline  
Her courtesies, and make the floor thy seat ;  
Refusing what is offer’d, food or wine ;  
Save only beg a crust of bread to eat.  
Then tell thy mission, and her present take ;  
Which when thou hast, set forth with pyx and cake,  
One in each hand, while yet thou may’st retreat.

25

‘Giving thy second cake to Cerberus,  
The coin to Charon, and that way whereby  
Thou camest following, thou comest thus  
To see again the starry choir on high.  
But guard thou well the pyx, nor once uplift  
The lid to look on Persephassa’s gift ;  
Else ’tis in vain I bid thee now not die.’

26

Then Psyche thank’d the tower, and stoopt her  
mouth  
To kiss the stones upon his rampart hoary ;  
And coming down his stair went hasting south,  
Along the steep Tænarian promontory ;  
And found the cave and temple by the cape,  
And took the cakes and coins, and made escape  
Beneath the earth, according to his story.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

And overtook the ass, but lent no aid ;  
And offer'd Charon with her teeth his fee ;  
And pass'd the floating ghost, in vain who pray'd ;  
And turned her back upon the weavers three ;  
And threw the honey-cake to that hell-hound  
Three-headed Cerberus ; and safe and sound,  
Came to the mansion of Persephonè.

28

Kindly received, she courtesy declined :  
Sat on the ground ; ate not, save where she lay,  
A crust of bread ; reveal'd the goddess' mind ;  
The gift took ; and return'd upon her way :  
Gave Cerberus his cake, Charon his fare,  
And saw through Hell's mouth to the purple air  
And one by one the keen stars melt in day.

29

Awhile from so long journeying in the shades  
Resting at Tænarus she came to know  
How, up the eastern coast some forty stades,  
There stood a temple of her goddess foe.  
There would she make her offering, there reclaim  
The prize, which now 'twas happiness to name,  
The joy that should redeem all passèd woe.

30

And wending by the sunny shore at noon,  
She with her pyx, and wondering what it hid,  
Of what kind, what the fashion of the boon  
Coud be, that she to look on was forbid,—  
Alas for Innocence so hard to teach !—  
At fancy's prick she sat her on the beach,  
And to content desire lifted the lid.

## January

31

She saw within nothing : But o'er her sight  
That looked on nothing gan a darkness creep.  
A cloudy poison, mix'd of Stygian night,  
Rapt her to deadly and infernal sleep.  
Backward she fell, like one when all is o'er,  
And lay outstretch'd, as lies upon the shore  
A drown'd corpse cast up by the murmuring deep.

## FEBRUARY

I

WHILE Eros in his chamber hid his tears;  
Mourning the loss of Psyche and her fate,  
The rumour of her safety reacht his ears  
And how she came to Aphrodite's gate :  
Whereat with hope return'd his hardihood,  
And secretly he purposed while he cou'd  
Himself to save her from the goddess' hate.

2

Then learning what he might and guessing more,  
His ready wit came soon to understand  
The journey to the far Laconian shore ;  
Whither to fly and seek his love he plan'd :  
And making good escape in dark of night,  
Ere the sun crost his true meridian flight  
He by Teuthronè struck the southern strand.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

There as it chanc'd he found that snowy bird  
Of Crete, that late made mischief with his queen,  
And now along the cliffs with wings unstir'd  
Sail'd, and that morn had cross'd the sea between :  
Whom as he past he hail'd, and question'd thus,  
' O snowy gull, if thou from Tænarus  
Be come, say, hast thou there my Psyche seen ?'

### 4

The gull replied 'Thy Psyche have I seen ;  
Walking beside the sea she joy'd to bear  
A pyx of dark obsidian's rarest green,  
Wherein she gazeth on her features fair.  
She is not hence by now six miles at most.'  
Then Eros bade him speed, and down the coast  
Held on his passage through the buoyant air.

### 5

With eager eye he search'd the salty marge,  
Boding all mischief from his mother's glee ;  
And wondering of her wiles, and what the charge  
Shut in the dark obsidian pyx might be.  
And lo ! at last, outstretch'd beside the rocks,  
Psyche as lifeless ; and the open box  
Laid with the weedy refuse of the sea.

### 6

He guess'd all, flew down, and beside her knelt,  
With both his hands stroking her temples wan ;  
And for the poison with his fingers felt,  
And drew it gently from her ; and anon  
She slowly from those Stygian fumes was freed ;  
Which he with magic handling and good heed  
Replaced in pyx, and shut the lid thereon.

## February

### 7

'O Psyche,' thus, and kissing her he cried,  
'O simple-hearted Psyche, once again  
Hast thou thy foolish longing gratified,  
A second time hath prying been thy bane.  
But lo ! I, love, am come, for I am thine :  
Nor ever more shall any fate malign,  
Or spite of goddess smite our love in twain.

### 8

'Let now that I have saved thee twice outweigh  
The once that I deserted thee : and thou  
Hast much obey'd for once to disobey,  
And wilt no more my bidding disallow.  
Take up thy pyx ; to Aphrodite go,  
And claim the promise of thy mighty foe ;  
Maybe that she will grant it to thee now.

### 9

'If she should yet refuse, despair not yet !'  
Then Psyche, when she felt his arms restore  
Their old embrace, and as their bodies met,  
Knew the great joy that grief is pardon'd for ;  
And how it doth first ecstasy excel,  
When love well-known, long-lost, and mournèd well  
In long days of no hope, comes home once more.

### 10

But Eros leaping up with purpose keen  
Into the air, as only love can fly,  
Bore her to heaven, and setting her unseen  
At Aphrodite's golden gate,—whereby  
They came as night was close on twilight dim,—  
There left, and bidding her say nought of him  
Went onward to the house of Zeus most high.



## *Eros & Psyche*

### 11

Where winning audience of the heavenly sire,  
Who well disposed to him was used to be.  
He told the story of his strong desire ;  
And boldly begg'd that Zeus would grant his plea  
That he might have sweet Psyche for his wife,  
And she be dower'd with immortal life,  
Since she was worthy, by his firm decree.

### 12

And great Zeus smiled ; and at the smile of Zeus  
All heaven was glad, and on the earth below  
Was calm and peace awhile and sorrow's truce :  
The sun shone forth and smote the winter snow,  
The flowers sprang, the birds gan sing and pair.  
And mortals, as they drew the brighten'd air,  
Marvel'd, and quite forgot their common woe.

### 13

Yet gave the Thunderer not his full consent  
Without some words : ' At length is come the day,'  
Thus spake he, ' when for all thy youth misspent.  
Thy mischief-making and thy wanton play  
Thou art upgrown to taste the sweet and sour :  
Good shall it work upon thee : from this hour  
Look we for better things. And this I say,

### 14

' That since thy birth, which all we took for bliss,  
Thou hast but mock'd us ; and no less on me  
Hast brought disfavour and contempt, ywiss.  
Than others that have had to do with thee :  
Till only such as vow'd themselves aloof  
From thee and thine were held in good approof ;  
And few there were, who thus of shame went free.

## *February*

15

'That punishment is shapen as reward  
Is like thy fortune : but our good estate  
We honour, while we sit to be adored :  
And thus 'twas written in the book of Fate.  
Not for thy pleasure, but the general weal  
Grant I the grace for which thou here dost kneel ;  
And that which I determine shall not wait.'

16

So wingèd Hermes through the heaven he sped,  
To warn the high celestials to his hall,  
Where they should Psyche see with Eros wed,  
And keep the day with feast ambrosial.  
And Hermes, flying through the skiey ways  
Of high Olympus, spread sweet Psyche's praise,  
And bade the mighty gods obey his call

17

Then all the Kronian gods and goddesses  
Assembl'd at his cry,—and now 'twas known  
Why Zeus had smiled,—the lesser majesties  
Attending them before his royal throne.  
Athena, mistress good of them that know,  
Came, and Apollo, warder off of woe,  
Who had to Psyche's sire her fate foreshown ;

18

Demeter, giver of the golden corn,  
Fair Hebe, honour'd at her Attic shrine,  
And Artemis with hunting spear and horn,  
And Dionysos, planter of the vine,  
With old Poseidon from the barren sea,  
And Leto, and the lame Hephæstos, he  
Himself who built those halls with skill divine.

( 181 )

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

And ruddy Pan with many a quip and quirk  
Air'd 'mong those lofty gods his mirth illbred,  
Bearing a mighty bowl of cretan work :  
Stern Arês, with his crisp hair helmeted,  
Came, and retirèd Hestia, and the god  
Hermes, with wingèd cap and ribbon'd rod,  
By whom the company was heralded.

20

And Hera sat by Zeus, and all around  
The Muses, that of learning make their choice ;  
Who, when Apollo struck his strings to sound,  
Sang in alternate music with sweet voice :  
And righteous Themis, and the Graces three  
Ushering the anger'd Aphrodite ; she  
Alone of all were there might not rejoice

21

But ere they sat to feast, Zeus bade them fill  
The cup ambrosial of immortal life,  
And said ' If Psyche drink,—and 'tis my will,—  
There is an end of this unhappy strife.  
Nor can the goddess, whose mislike had birth  
From too great honour paid the bride on earth,  
Forbid her any more for Eros' wife.'

22

Then Aphrodite said ' So let it be.'  
And Psyche was brought in, with such a flush  
Of joy upon her face, as there to see  
Was fairer to love's eye than beauty's blush.  
And then she drank the eternal wine, whose draught  
Can Terror cease : which flesh hath never quafft,  
Nor doth it flow from grape that mortals crush.

## February

23

And next stood Eros forth, and took her hand,  
And kisst her happy face before them all :  
And Zeus proclaim'd them married, and outban'd  
From heaven whoever should that word miscall.  
And then all sat to feast, and one by one  
Pledged Psyche ere they drank and cried *Well done !*  
And merry laughter rang throughout the hall.

24

So thus was Eros unto Psyche wed,  
The heavenly bridegroom to his earthly bride,  
Who won his love, in simple maidenhead :  
And by her love herself she glorified,  
And him from wanton wildness disinclined ;  
Since in his love for her he came to find  
A joy unknown through all Olympus wide.

25

And Psyche for her fall was quite forgiven,  
Since 'gainst herself when tempted to rebel,  
By others' malice on her ruin driven,  
Only of sweet simplicity she fell :—  
Wherein who fall may fall unto the skies ;—  
And being foolish she was yet most wise,  
And took her trials patiently and well.

26

And Aphrodite since her full defeat  
Is kinder and less jealous than before,  
And smiling on them both, calls Psyche sweet ;  
But thinks her son less manly than of yore :  
Though still she holds his arm of some renown,  
When he goes smiting mortals up and down,  
Piercing their marrow with his weapons sore.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

*So now in steadfast love and happy state*  
They hold for aye their mansion in the sky,  
And send down heavenly peace on those who mate,  
In virgin love, to find their joy thereby :  
Whom gently Eros shooteth, and apart  
Keepeth for them from all his sheaf that dart  
Which Psyche in his chamber pickt to try.

28

Now in that same month Psyche bare a child,  
Who straight in heaven was namèd Hedonè  
In mortal tongues by other letters styled ;  
Whom all to love, however named, agree :  
Whom in our noble English JOY we call,  
And honour them among us most of all,  
Whose happy children are as fair as she.

29

### *ENVOY*

IT IS MY PRAYER THAT **SHE** MAY SMILE ON ALL  
WHO READ MY TALE AS SHE HATH SMILED ON ME.

# THE GROWTH OF LOVE



## PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *XXIV Sonnets.* Ed. Bumpus, 1876.
2. *LXXIX Sonnets.* Daniel Press, 1889.

*This edition was copied in America.*

3. *Do. do. Black letter.* 1890.
4. *LXIX Sonnets.* Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. I, 1898.

# THE GROWTH OF LOVE

## I

THEY that in play can do the thing they would,  
Having an instinct throned in reason's place,  
—And every perfect action hath the grace  
Of indolence or thoughtless hardihood—  
These are the best : yet be there workmen good  
Who lose in earnestness control of face,  
Or reckon means, and rapt in effort base  
Reach to their end by steps well understood.

Me whom thou sawest of late strive with the pains  
Of one who spends his strength to rule his nerve,  
—Even as a painter breathlessly who strains  
His scarcely moving hand lest it should swerve—  
Behold me, now that I have cast my chains,  
Master of the art which for thy sake I serve.



## *The Growth of Love*

### 2

For thou art mine : and now I am ashamed  
To have usèd means to win so pure acquist,  
And of my trembling fear that might have misst  
Thro' very care the gold at which I aim'd ;  
And am as happy but to hear thee named,  
As are those gentle souls by angels kisst  
In pictures seen leaving their marble cist  
To go before the throne of grace unblamed.

Nor surer am I water hath the skill  
To quench my thirst, or that my strength is freed  
In delicate ordination as I will,  
Than that to be myself is all I need  
For thee to be most mine : so I stand still,  
And save to taste my joy no more take heed.

### 3

THE whole world now is but the minister  
Of thee to me : I see no other scheme  
But universal love, from timeless dream  
Waking to thee his joy's interpreter.  
I walk around and in the fields confer  
Of love at large with tree and flower and stream,  
And list the lark descant upon my theme,  
Heaven's musical accepted worshipper.

Thy smile outfaceth ill : and that old feud  
'Twixt things and me is quash'd in our new truce ;  
And nature now dearly with thee endued  
No more in shame ponders her old excuse,  
But quite forgets her frowns and antics rude,  
So kindly hath she grown to her new use.

## *The Growth of Love*

### 4.

FOR beauty being the best of all we know  
Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims  
Of nature, and on joys whose earthly names  
Were never told can form and sense bestow ;  
And man hath sped his instinct to outgo  
The step of science ; and against her shames  
Imagination stakes out heavenly claims,  
    'lding a tower above the head of woe

Thus may I think the adopting Muses chose  
Their sons by name, knowing none would be heard  
Or writ so oft in all the world as those,—  
Dan Chaucer, mighty Shakespeare, then for third  
The classic Milton, and to us arose  
Shelley with liquid music in the word.

### 5

THE poets were good teachers, for they taught  
Earth had this joy ; but that 'twould ever be  
That fortune should be perfected in me,  
My heart of hope dared not engage the thought.  
So I stood low, and now but to be caught  
By any self-styled lords of the age with thee  
Vexes my modesty, lest they should see  
I hold them owls and peacocks, things of nought.

And when we sit alone, and as I please  
I taste thy love's full smile, and can enstate  
The pleasure of my kingly heart at ease,  
My thought swims like a ship, that with the weight  
Of her rich burden sleeps on the infinite seas  
Becalm'd, and cannot stir her golden freight.

## *The Growth of Love*

### 6

WH thou art mine : and now I am ashamed  
And have used means to win so pure acquist,  
We'l of my trembling fear that might have misst      rch,  
And to' very care the gold at which I aim'd ;  
Al'd am as happy but to hear thee named,  
Th' are those gentle souls by angels kisst  
A pictures seen leaving their marble cist  
There before the throne of grace unblamed.

Beneath the crisp and wintry carpet hid  
A million buds but stay their blossoming ;  
And trustful birds have built their nests amid  
The shuddering boughs, and only wait to sing  
Till one soft shower from the south shall bid,  
And hither tempt the pilgrim steps of spring.

### 7

IN thee my spring of life hath bid the while  
A rose unfold beyond the summer's best,  
The mystery of joy made manifest  
In love's self-answering and awakening smile ;  
Whereby the lips in wonder reconcile  
Passion with peace, and show desire at rest,—  
A grace of silence by the Greek unguessed,  
That bloom'd to immortalize the Tuscan style :

When first the angel-song that faith hath ken'd  
Fancy pourtray'd, above recorded oath  
Of Israel's God, or light of poem pen'd ;  
The very countenance of plighted troth  
'Twixt heaven and earth, where in one moment blend  
The hope of one and happiness of both.

## *The Growth of Love*

### 8

FOR beauty being the best of all we know  
Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims  
Of nature, and on joys whose earthly names  
Were never told can form and sense bestow ;  
And man hath sped his instinct to outgo  
The step of science ; and against her shames  
Imagination stakes out heavenly claims,  
Building a tower above the head of woe.

Nor is there fairer work for beauty found  
Than that she win in nature her release  
From all the woes that in the world abound :  
Nay with his sorrow may his love increase,  
If from man's greater need beauty redound,  
And claim his tears for homage of his peace.

### 9

THUS to thy beauty doth my fond heart look,  
That late dismay'd her faithless faith forbore ;  
And wins again her love lost in the lore  
Of schools and script of many a learned book :  
For thou what ruthless death untimely took  
Shalt now in better brotherhood restore,  
And save my batter'd ship that far from shore  
High on the dismal deep in tempest shook.

So in despite of sorrow lately learn'd  
I still hold true to truth since thou art true,  
Nor wail the woe which thou to joy hast turn'd :  
Nor come the heavenly sun and bathing blue  
To my life's need more splendid and unearn'd  
Than hath thy gift outmatch'd desire and due.

## *The Growth of Love*

### IO

WINTER was not unkind because uncouth ;  
His prison'd time made me a closer guest,  
And gave thy graciousness a warmer zest,  
Biting all else with keen and angry tooth :  
And bravelier the triumphant blood of youth  
Mantling thy cheek its happy home possess,  
And sterner sport by day put strength to test,  
And custom's feast at night gave tongue to truth.

Or say hath flaunting summer a device  
To match our midnight revelry, that rang  
With steel and flame along the snow-girt ice ?  
Or when we hark't to nightingales that sang  
On dewy eves in spring, did they entice  
To gentler love than winter's icy fang ?

### II

THERE'S many a would-be poet at this hour,  
Rhymes of a love that he hath never woo'd,  
And o'er his lamplit desk in solitude  
Deems that he sitteth in the Muses' bower :  
And some the flames of earthly love devour,  
Who have taken no kiss of Nature, nor renew'd  
In the world's wilderness with heavenly food  
The sickly body of their perishing power.

So none of all our company, I boast,  
But now would mock my penning, could they see  
How down the right it maps a jagged coast ;  
Seeing they hold the manlier praise to be  
Strong hand and will, and the heart best when most  
'Tis sober, simple, true, and fancy-free.

## *The Growth of Love*

### 12

How could I quarrel or blame you, most dear,  
Who all thy virtues gavest and kept back none ;  
Kindness and gentleness, truth without peer,  
And beauty that my fancy fed upon ?

Now not my life's contrition for my fault  
Can blot that day, nor work me recompence,  
Tho' I might worthily thy worth exalt,  
Making thee long amends for short offence.

For surely nowhere, love, if not in thee  
Are grace and truth and beauty to be found ;  
And all my praise of these can only be  
A praise of thee, howe'er by thee disown'd :  
While still thou must be mine tho' far removed,  
And I for one offence no more beloved.

### 13

Now since to me altho' by thee refused  
The world is left, I shall find pleasure still ;  
The art that most I have loved but little used  
Will yield a world of fancies at my will :

And tho' where'er thou goest it is from me,  
I where I go thee in my heart must bear ;  
And what thou wert that wilt thou ever be,  
My choice, my best, my loved, and only fair.

Farewell, yet think not such farewell a change  
From tenderness, tho' once to meet or part  
But on short absence so could sense derange  
That tears have graced the greeting of my heart ;

They were proud drops and had my leave to fall,  
Not on thy pity for my pain to call.

## *The Growth of Love*

14

WHEN sometimes in an ancient house where state  
From noble ancestry is handed on,  
We see but desolation thro' the gate,  
And richest heirlooms all to ruin gone ;

Because maybe some fancied shame or fear,  
Bred of disease or melancholy fate,  
Hath driven the owner from his rightful sphere  
To wander nameless save to pity or hate :

What is the wreck of all he hath in fief,  
When he that hath is wrecking ? nought is fine  
Unto the sick, nor doth it burden grief  
That the house perish when the soul doth pine.

Thus I my state despise, slain by a sting  
So slight 'twould not have hurt a meaner thing.

15

WHO builds a ship must first lay down the keel  
Of health, whereto the ribs of mirth are wed :  
And knit, with beams and knees of strength, a bed  
For decks of purity, her floor and ceil.  
Upon her masts, Adventure, Pride, and Zeal,  
To fortune's wind the sails of purpose spread :  
And at the prow make figured maidenhead  
O'eride the seas and answer to the wheel.

And let him deep in memory's hold have stor'd  
Water of Helicon : and let him fit  
The needle that doth true with heaven accord :  
Then bid her crew, love, diligence and wit  
With justice, courage, temperance come aboard,  
And at her helm the master reason sit.

## *The Growth of Love*

16

THIS world is unto God a work of art,  
Of which the unaccomplish'd heavenly plan  
Is hid in life within the creature's heart,  
And for perfection looketh unto man.

Ah me ! those thousand ages : with what slow  
Pains and persistence were his idols made,  
Destroy'd and made, ere ever he could know  
The mighty mother must be so obey'd.

For lack of knowledge and thro' little skill  
His childish mimicry outwent his aim ;  
His effort shaped the genius of his will ;  
Till thro' distinction and revolt he came,  
True to his simple terms of good and ill,  
Seeking the face of Beauty without blame.

17

SAY who be these light-bearded, sunburnt faces  
In negligent and travel-stain'd array,  
That in the city of Dante come to-day,  
Haughtily visiting her holy places?  
O these be noble men that hide their graces,  
True England's blood, her ancient glory's stay,  
By tales of fame diverted on their way  
Home from the rule of oriental races.

Life-trifling lions these, of gentle eyes  
And motion delicate, but swift to fire  
For honour, passionate where duty lies,  
Most loved and loving : and they quickly tire  
Of Florence, that she one day more denies  
The embrace of wife and son, of sister or sire.



## *The Growth of Love*

18

WHERE San Miniato's convent from the sun  
At forenoon overlooks the city of flowers  
I sat, and gazing on her domes and towers  
Call'd up her famous children one by one :  
And three who all the rest had far outdone,  
Mild Giotto first, who stole the morning hours,  
I saw, and god-like Buonarroti's powers,  
And Dante, gravest poet, her much-wrong'd son.

Is all this glory, I said, another's praise ?  
Are these heroic triumphs things of old,  
And do I dead upon the living gaze ?  
Or rather doth the mind, that can behold  
The wondrous beauty of the works and days,  
Create the image that her thoughts enfold ?

19

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,  
Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright ;  
And that your names, remember'd day and night,  
Live on the lips of those that love you well.  
'Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of hell,  
Each with the special grace of your delight :  
Ye are the world's creators, and thro' might  
Of everlasting love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names, above the storm  
And war of Time and nature's endless wrong  
Ye flit, in pictured truth and peaceful form,  
Wing'd with bright music and melodious song,—  
The flaming flowers of heaven, making May-dance  
In dear Imagination's rich pleasance.

## *The Growth of Love*

20

THE world still goeth about to shew and hide,  
Befool'd of all opinion, fond of fame :  
But he that can do well taketh no pride,  
And see'th his error, undisturb'd by shame :

So poor's the best that longest life can do,  
The most so little, diligently done ;  
So mighty is the beauty that doth woo,  
So vast the joy that love from love hath won.

God's love to win is easy, for He loveth  
Desire's fair attitude, nor strictly weighs  
The broken thing, but all alike approveth  
Which love hath aim'd at Him : that is heaven's praise :

And if we look for any praise on earth,  
'Tis in man's love : all else is nothing worth.

21

O FLESH and blood, comrade to tragic pain  
And clownish merriment ; whose sense could wake  
Sermons in stones, and count death but an ache,  
All things as vanity, yet nothing vain :  
The world, set in thy heart, thy passionate strain  
Reveal'd anew ; but thou for man didst make  
Nature twice natural, only to shake  
Her kingdom with the creatures of thy brain.

Lo, Shakespeare, since thy time nature is loth  
To yield to art her fair supremacy ;  
In conquering one thou hast so enrichèd both.  
What shall I say ? for God—whose wise decree  
Confirmeth all He did by all He doth—  
Doubled His whole creation making thee.

## *The Growth of Love*

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,  
And carry purpose up to the ends of the air :  
In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where  
By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies :  
Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise  
The silence : over plains in the moonlight bare  
I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare  
In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds ! then I cry,  
Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd  
By the only joy of knowing that ye fly ;  
Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,  
The alphabet of a god's idea, and I  
Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,  
That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,  
Hailing in each the citadel divine  
The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago ;  
Until at length your feeble steps and slow  
Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,  
And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine  
Whether it be Jerusalem or no :

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you ;  
For, having worshipp'd many a barren face,  
I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to :  
I stand a pagan in the holy place ;  
Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,  
And question with the God that I embrace.

## *The Growth of Love*

### 24

SPRING hath her own bright days of calm and peace ;  
Her melting air, at every breath we draw,  
Floods heart with love to praise God's gracious law :  
But suddenly—so short is pleasure's lease—  
The cold returns, the buds from growing cease,  
And nature's conquer'd face is full of awe ;  
As now the trait'rous north with icy flaw  
Freezes the dew upon the sick lamb's fleece,

And 'neath the mock sun searching everywhere  
Rattles the crispèd leaves with shivering din :  
So that the birds are silent with despair  
Within the thickets ; nor their armour thin  
Will gaudy flies adventure in the air,  
Nor any lizard sun his spotted skin.

### 25

NOTHING is joy without thee : I can find  
No rapture in the first relays of spring,  
In songs of birds, in young buds opening,  
Nothing inspiriting and nothing kind ;  
For lack of thee, who once wert throned behind  
All beauty, like a strength where graces cling,—  
The jewel and heart of light, which everything  
Wrestled in rivalry to hold enshrined.

Ah ! since thou'rt fled, and I in each fair sight  
The sweet occasion of my joy deplore,  
Where shall I seek thee best, or whom invite  
Within thy sacred temples and adore ?  
Who shall fill thought and truth with old delight,  
And lead my soul in life as heretofore ?

## *The Growth of Love*

26

THE work is done, and from the fingers fall  
The bloodwarm tools that brought the labour thro' :  
The tasking eye that overrunneth all  
Rests, and affirms there is no more to do.

Now the third joy of making, the sweet flower  
Of blessed work, bloometh in godlike spirit ;  
Which whoso plucketh holdeth for an hour  
The shrivelling vanity of mortal merit.

And thou, my perfect work, thou'rt of to-day ;  
To-morrow a poor and alien thing wilt be,  
True only should the swift life stand at stay :  
Therefore farewell, nor look to bide with me.

Go find thy friends, if there be one to love thee :  
Casting thee forth, my child, I rise above thee.

27

THE fabled sea-snake, old Leviathan,  
Or else what grisly beast of scaly chine  
That champ'd the ocean-wrack and swash'd the brine,  
Before the new and milder days of man,  
Had never rib nor bray nor swindging fan  
Like his iron swimmer of the Clyde or Tync,  
Late-born of golden seed to breed a line  
Of offspring swifter and more huge of plan.

Straight is her going, for upon the sun  
When once she hath look'd, her path and place are plain ;  
With tireless speed she smiteth one by one  
The shuddering seas and foams along the main ;  
And her eased breath, when her wild race is run,  
Roars thro' her nostrils like a hurricane.

## *The Growth of Love*

28

**A** THOUSAND times hath in my heart's behoof  
My tongue been set his passion to impart;  
A thousand times hath my too coward heart  
My mouth reclosed and fix'd it to the roof;  
Then with such cunning hath it held aloof,  
A thousand times kept silence with such art  
That words could do no more: yet on thy part  
Hath silence given a thousand times reproof.

'hus to be humbled: 'tis to be undone;  
L'est fell'd; a city razed to ground;  
Back unsewn, unwoven and unspun  
Not a thread remains that can be wound.  
Yet, O lover, thee, the ruin'd one,  
Who hath humbled thus hath also crown'd.

29

I TRAVEL to thee with the sun's first rays,  
That lift the dark west and unwrap the night;  
I dwell beside thee when he walks the height,  
And fondly toward thee at his setting gaze.  
I wait upon thy coming, but always—  
Dancing to meet my thoughts if they invite—  
Thou hast outrun their longing with delight,  
And in my solitude dost mock my praise.

Now doth my drop of time transcend the whole:  
I see no fame in Khufu's pyramid,  
No history where loveless Nile doth roll.  
—This is eternal life, which doth forbid  
Mortal detraction to the exalted soul,  
And from her inward eye all fate hath hid.

## *The Growth of Love*

30

My lady pleases me and I please her ;  
This know we both, and I besides know well  
Wherefore I love her, and I love to tell  
My love, as all my loving songs aver.  
But what on her part could the passion stir,  
Tho' 'tis more difficult for love to spell,  
Yet can I dare divine how this befel,  
Nor will her lips deny it if I err.

And thou, my perfect work, thou'rt of to-day ;  
Morrow a poor and alien thing wilt be,  
The only should the swift life stand at stay :  
Therefore farewell, nor look to bide with me.  
Go find thy friends, if there be one to love thee :  
Ting thee forth, my child, I rise above thee.

31

In all things beautiful, I cannot see  
Her sit or stand, but love is stir'd anew :  
'Tis joy to watch the folds fall as they do,  
And all that comes is past expectancy.  
If she be silent, silence let it be ;  
He who would bid her speak might sit and sue  
The deep-brow'd Phidian Jove to be untrue  
To his two thousand years' solemnity.

Ah, but her launchèd passion, when she sings,  
Wins on the hearing like a shapen prow  
Borne by the mastery of its urgent wings :  
Or if she deign her wisdom, she doth show  
She hath the intelligence of heavenly things,  
Unsullied by man's mortal overthrow.

## *The Growth of Love*

32

THUS to be humbled : 'tis that ranging pride  
No refuge hath ; that in his castle strong  
Brave reason sits beleaguer'd, who so long  
Kept field, but now must starve where he doth hide ;  
That industry, who once the foe defied,  
Lies slaughter'd in the trenches ; that the throng  
Of idle fancies pipe their foolish song,  
Where late the puissant captains fought and died.

Thus to be humbled : 'tis to be undone ;  
A forest fell'd ; a city razed to ground ;  
A cloak unsewn, unwoven and unspun  
Till not a thread remains that can be wound.  
And yet, O lover, thee, the ruin'd one,  
Love who hath humbled thus hath also crown'd.

33

AT times with hurried hoofs and scatte  
I race by field or highway, and my horse  
Spare not, but urge direct in headlong career  
Unto some fair far hill that gain I must :  
But near arrived the vision soon mistrust,  
Rein in, and stand as one who sees the scene  
Of strong illusion, shaming thought to force  
From off his mind the soil of passion's guile

I have no care for what was most my care,  
But all around me see fresh beauty born,  
And common sights grown lovelier than they were :  
I dream of love, and in the light of morn  
Tremble, beholding all things very fair  
And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.



## *The Growth of Love*

### 34

*O my goddess divine* sometimes I say :—  
Now let this word for ever and all suffice ;  
Thou art insatiable, and yet not twice  
Can even thy lover give his soul away :  
And for my acts, that at thy feet I lay ;  
For never any other, by device  
Of wisdom, love or beauty, could entice  
My homage to the measure of this day.

I have no more to give thee : lo, I have sold  
My life, have emptied out my heart, and spent  
Whate'er I had ; till like a beggar, bold  
With nought to lose, I laugh and am content.  
A beggar kisses thee ; nay, love, behold,  
I fear not : thou too art in beggarment.

### 35

ALL earths beautiful, I cannot see  
To leadr stand, but love is stir'd anew :  
Yet liet to watch the folds fall as they do,  
That fethat comes is past expectancy.

Jove silent, silence let it be ;  
The b would bid her speak might sit and sue  
Wherep-brow'd Phidian Jove to be untrue  
Down, two thousand years' solemnity.

But I my time abuse, my eyes by day  
Center'd on thee, by night my heart on fire—  
Letting my number'd moments run away—  
Nor e'en 'twixt night and day to heaven aspire :

So true it is that what the eye seeth not  
But slow is loved, and loved is soon forgot.

## *The Growth of Love*

36

**O** MY life's mischief, once my love's delight,  
That drew'st a mortgage on my heart's estate,  
Whose baneful clause is never out of date,  
Nor can avenging time restore my right :  
Whom first to lose sounded that note of spite,  
Whereto my doleful days were tuned by fate :  
That art the well-loved cause of all my hate,  
The sun whose wandering makes my hopeless night :

Thou being in all my lacking all I lack,  
It is thy goodness turns my grace to crime,  
Thy fleetness from my goal which holds me back ;  
Wherefore my feet go out of step with time,  
My very grasp of life is old and slack,  
And even my passion falters in my rhyme.

37

At times with hurried hoofs and scattering dust  
I race by field or highway, and my horse  
Spare not, but urge direct in headlong course  
Unto some fair far hill that gain I must :  
But near arrived the vision soon mistrust,  
Rein in, and stand as one who sees the source  
Of strong illusion, shaming thought to force  
From off his mind the soil of passion's gust.

My brow I bare then, and with slacken'd speed  
Can view the country pleasant on all sides,  
And to kind salutation give good heed :  
I ride as one who for his pleasure rides,  
And stroke the neck of my delighted steed,  
And seek what cheer the village inn provides.

## *The Growth of Love*

38

AN idle June day on the sunny Thames,  
Floating or rowing as our fancy led,  
Now in the high beams basking as we sped,  
Now in green shade gliding by mirror'd stems ;  
By lock and weir and isle, and many a spot  
Of memoried pleasure, glad with strength and skill,  
Friendship, good wine, and mirth, that serve not ill  
The heavenly Muse, tho' she requite them not :

I would have life—thou saidst—all as this day,  
Simple enjoyment calm in its excess,  
With not a grief to cloud, and not a ray  
Of passion overhot my peace to oppress ;  
With no ambition to reproach delay,  
Nor rapture to disturb its happiness.

39

A MAN that sees by chance his picture, made  
As once a child he was, handling some toy,  
Will gaze to find his spirit within the boy,  
Yet hath no secret with the soul pourtray'd :  
He cannot think the simple thought which play'd  
Upon those features then so frank and coy ;  
'Tis his, yet oh ! not his : and o'er the joy  
His fatherly pity bends in tears dismay'd.

Proud of his prime maybe he stand at best,  
And lightly wear his strength, or aim it high,  
In knowledge, skill and courage self-possess :—  
Yet in the pictured face a charm doth lie,  
The one thing lost more worth than all the rest,  
Which seeing, he fears to say *This child was I.*

## *The Growth of Love*

40

~~COME~~ gentle sleep, I woo thee : come and take  
Not now the child into thine arms, from fright  
Composed by drowsy tune and shaded light,  
Whom ignorant of thee thou didst nurse and ma  
Nor now the boy, who scorn'd thee for the sake  
Of growing knowledge or mysterious night,  
Tho' with fatigue thou didst his limbs invite,  
And heavily weigh the eyes that would not wake ;

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place  
Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son ;  
But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace :  
So that I praise the artist, who hath done  
A portrait, for my worship, of the face  
Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

41

If I could but forget and not recall  
So well my time of pleasure and of play,  
When ancient nature was all new and gay,  
Light as the fashion that doth last enthrall,—  
Ah mighty nature, when my heart was small,  
Nor dream'd what fearful searchings underlay  
The flowers and leafy ecstasy of May,  
The breathing summer sloth, the scented fall :

Could I forget, then were the fight not hard,  
Press'd in the mêlée of accursed things,  
Having such help in love and such reward :  
But that 'tis I who once—'tis this that stings—  
Once dwelt within the gate that angels guard,  
Where yet I'd be had I but heavenly wings.

## *The Growth of Love*

42

With idle June day on the sunny Thames,  
Thatching or rowing as our fancy led,  
I bow in the high beams basking as we sped,  
Tow in green shade gliding by mirror'd stems ;  
For By lock and weir and isle, and many a spot  
Of memoried pleasure, glad with strength and skill,  
Friendship, good wine, and mirth, that serve not ill  
The heavenly Muse, tho' she requite them not :

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high  
Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare ;  
Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.  
So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er  
From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,  
When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

43

**W**HEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand  
The traveller faints, upon his closing ear  
Steals a fantastic music : he may hear  
The babbling fountain of his native land.  
Before his eyes the vision seems to stand,  
Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,  
Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,  
And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings  
The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire—  
O shameless, O contempt of holy things.  
But never of their wanton play they tire,  
As not athirst they sit beside the springs,  
While he must quench in death his lost desire.

## *The Growth of Love*

48

COME gentle sleep, I woo thee : come and take  
Not now the child into thine arms, from fright  
Composed by drowsy tune and shaded light,  
Whom ignorant of thee thou didst nurse and make ;  
Nor now the boy, who scorn'd thee for the sake  
Of growing knowledge or mysterious night,  
Tho' with fatigue thou didst his limbs invite,  
And heavily weigh the eyes that would not wake ;

Prodigal nature makes us but to taste  
One perfect joy, which given she niggard grows ;  
And lest her precious gift should run to waste,  
Adds to its loss a thousand lesser woes :  
So to the memory of the gift that graced  
Her hand, her graceless hand more grace bestows.

45

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice  
Of works unperfected and broken schemes,  
Where is the promise of my early dreams,  
The smile of beauty and the pearl of price ?  
No charm is left now that could once entice  
Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,  
And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,  
Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air  
Has chill'd endeavour : sickly memories reign  
In every room, and ghosts are on the stair :  
And hope behind the dusty window-pane  
Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care  
Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

## *The Growth of Love*

42

W<sup>H</sup>idle June day on the sunny Thames,  
T<sup>H</sup>oating or rowing as our fancy led,  
I<sup>O</sup>w in the high beams basking as we sped,  
T<sup>O</sup>w in green shade gliding by mirror'd stems ;  
F<sup>Y</sup> By lock and weir and isle, and many a spot  
S<sup>O</sup>f memoried pleasure, glad with strength and skill,  
F<sup>R</sup>iendship, good wine, and mirth, that serve not ill  
T<sup>H</sup>e heavenly Muse, tho' she requite them not :

Now if men speak of love, 'tis not my love ;  
Nor are their hopes nor joys mine, nor their life  
Of praise the life that I think honour of :  
Nay tho' they turn from house and child and wife  
And self, and in the thought of heaven above  
Hold, as do I, all mortal things at strife.

47

S<sup>I</sup>NCE then 'tis only pity looking back,  
F<sup>E</sup>ar looking forward, and the busy mind  
W<sup>I</sup>ll in one woeful moment more upwind  
T<sup>H</sup>an lifelong years unroll of bitter or black ;  
W<sup>H</sup>at is man's privilege, his hoarding knack  
O<sup>F</sup> memory with foreboding so combined,  
W<sup>H</sup>ereby he comes to dream he hath of kind  
T<sup>H</sup>e perpetuity which all things lack ?

Which but to hope is doubtful joy, to have  
B<sup>E</sup>ing a continuance of what, alas,  
W<sup>E</sup> mourn, and scarcely bear with to the grave ;  
O<sup>R</sup> something so unknown that it o'erpass  
T<sup>H</sup>e thought of comfort, and the sense that gave  
C<sup>A</sup>nnot consider it thro' any glass.

## *The Growth of Love*

48

COME gentle sleep, I woo thee : come and take  
Not now the child into thine arms, from fright  
Composed by drowsy tune and shaded light,  
Whom ignorant of thee thou didst nurse and make ;  
Nor now the boy, who scorn'd thee for the sake  
Of growing knowledge or mysterious night,  
Tho' with fatigue thou didst his limbs invite,  
And heavily weigh the eyes that would not wake ;

No, nor the man severe, who from his best  
Failing, alert fled to thee, that his breath,  
Blood, force and fire should come at morn redrest ;  
But me, from whom thy comfort tarrieth,  
For all my wakeful prayer sent without rest  
To thee, O shew and shadow of my death.

49

**T**HE spirit's eager sense for sad or gay  
Filleth with what he will our vessel full :  
Be joy his bent, he waiteth not joy's day  
But like a child at any toy will pull :

If sorrow, he will weep for fancy's sake,  
And spoil heaven's plenty with forbidden care.  
What fortune most denies we slave to take ;  
Nor can fate load us more than we can bear.

Since pleasure with the having disappeareth,  
He who hath least in hand hath most at heart,  
While he keep hope : as he who alway feareth  
A grief that never comes hath yet the smart ;

And heavier far is our self-wrought distress,  
For when God sendeth sorrow, it doth bless.



## *The Growth of Love*

50

THE world comes not to an end : her city-hives  
Swarm with the tokens of a changeless trade,  
With rolling wheel, driver and flagging jade,  
Rich men and beggars, children, priests and wives.  
New homes on old are set, as lives on lives ;  
Invention with invention overlaid :  
But still or tool or toy or book or blade  
Shaped for the hand, that holds and toils and strives.

The men to-day toil as their fathers taught,  
With little better'd means ; for works depend  
On works and overlap, and thought on thought :  
And thro' all change the smiles of hope amend  
The weariest face, the same love changed in nought :  
In this thing too the world comes not to an end.

51

O MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,  
That in my secret book with so much care  
I write you, this one here and that one there,  
Marking the time and order of your birth ?  
How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth,  
A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,  
Look ye for any welcome anywhere  
From any shelf or heart-home on the earth ?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd  
To write you such as once, when I was young,  
Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.  
'Twere something yet to live again among  
The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd  
My art, be there remember'd for my song.

## *The Growth of Love*

52

Who takes the census of the living dead,  
Ere the day come when memory shall o'ercrowd  
The kingdom of their fame, and for that proud  
And airy people find no room nor stead?

Ere hoarding Time, that ever thrusteth back  
The fairest treasures of his ancient store,  
Better with best confound, so he may pack  
His greedy gatherings closer, more and more?

Let the true Muse rewrite her sullied page,  
And purge her story of the men of hate,  
That they go dirgeless down to Satan's rage  
With all else foul, deform'd and miscreate:

She hath full toil to keep the names of love  
Honour'd on earth, as they are bright above.

53

I HEARD great Hector sounding war's alarms,  
Where thro' the listless ghosts chiding he strode,  
As tho' the Greeks besieged his last abode,  
And he his Troy's hope still, her king-at-arms.  
But on those gentle meads, which Lethe charms  
With weary oblivion, his passion glow'd  
Like the cold night-worm's candle, and only show'd  
Such mimic flame as neither heats nor harms.

'Twas plain to read, even by those shadows quaint,  
How rude catastrophe had dim'd his day,  
And blighted all his cheer with stern complaint:  
*To arms! to arms!* what more the voice would say  
Was swallow'd in the valleys, and grew faint  
Upon the thin air, as he pass'd away.

## *The Growth of Love*

54

**S**INCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond  
Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,  
Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,  
Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond ;  
Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond  
Is writ my promise of eternity ;  
Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,  
That if thou look but from me I despond ;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this :  
Think of the dedication of my youth :  
Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss :  
Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,  
My sheer annihilation if I miss :  
Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

55

**T**HESSE meagre rhymes, which a returning mood  
Sometimes o'errateth, I as oft despise ;  
And knowing them illnated, stiff and rude,  
See them as others with contemptuous eyes.

Nay, and I wonder less at God's respect  
For man, a minim jot in time and space,  
Than at the soaring faith of His elect,  
That gift of gifts, the comfort of His grace.

O truth unsearchable, O heavenly love,  
Most infinitely tender, so to touch  
The work that we can meanly reckon of :  
Surely—I say—we are favour'd overmuch.

But of this wonder, what doth most amaze  
Is that we know our love is held for praise.

## *The Growth of Love*

56

BEAUTY sat with me all the summer day,  
Awaiting the sure triumph of her eye ;  
Nor mark'd I till we parted, how, hard by,  
Love in her train stood ready for his prey.  
She, as too proud to join herself the fray,  
Trusting too much to her divine ally,  
When she saw victory tarry, chid him—' Why  
Dost thou not at one stroke this rebel slay ? '

Then generous Love, who holds my heart in fee,  
Told of our ancient truce : so from the fight  
We straight withdrew our forces, all the three.  
Baffled but not dishearten'd she took flight  
Scheming new tactics : Love came home with me,  
And prompts my measured verses as I write.

57

IN autumn moonlight, when the white air wan  
Is fragrant in the wake of summer hence,  
'Tis sweet to sit entranced, and muse thereon  
In melancholy and godlike indolence :

When the proud spirit, lull'd by mortal prime  
To fond pretence of immortality,  
Vieweth all moments from the birth of time,  
All things whate'er have been or yet shall be.

And like the garden, where the year is spent,  
The ruin of old life is full of yearning,  
Mingling poetic rapture of lament  
With flowers and sunshine of spring's sure returning ;

Only in visions of the white air wan  
By godlike fancy seized and dwelt upon.

## *The Growth of Love*

58

WHEN first I saw thee, dearest, if I say  
The spells that conjure back the hour and place,  
And evermore I look upon thy face,  
As in the spring of years long pass'd away ;  
No fading of thy beauty's rich array,  
No detriment of age on thee I trace,  
But time's defeat written in spoils of grace,  
From rivals robb'd, whom thou didst pity and slay.

So hath thy growth been, thus thy faith is true,  
Unchanged in change, still to my growing sense,  
To life's desire the same, and nothing new :  
But as thou wert in dream and prescience  
At love's arising, now thou stand'st to view  
In the broad noon of his magnificence.

59

'T WAS on the very day winter took leave  
Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies  
The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise  
At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,  
I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve ;  
Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise  
As Adam went alone in Paradise,  
Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around  
I laid me down beneath a flowering tree,  
And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound ;  
In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,  
Rending my body, where with hurried sound  
I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

## *The Growth of Love*

64

YE blessed saints, that now in heaven enjoy  
The purchase of those tears, the world's disdain,  
Doth Love still with his war your peace annoy,  
Or hath Death freed you from his ancient pain?

Have ye no springtide, and no burst of May  
In flowers and leafy trees, when solemn night  
Pants with love-music, and the holy day  
Breaks on the ear with songs of heavenly light?

What make ye and what strive for? keep ye thought  
Of us, or in new excellence divine  
Is old forgot? or do ye count for nought  
What the Greek did and what the Florentine?

We keep your memories well: O in your store  
Live not our best joys treasured evermore?

61

THE dark and serious angel, who so long  
Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,  
Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty  
To take his pastime with the peerless throng.  
Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong,  
Wounding his heart to wonder what might be  
God's purpose in a soul of such degree;  
And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close  
He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay,  
And work confusion of so many foes:  
He thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,  
Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes  
Into what great reward I cannot say.

## *The Growth of Love*

58

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The spells that conjure back the hour and place,  
And evermore I look upon thy face,  
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To life's desire the same, and nothing new :  
But as thou wert in dream and prescience  
At love's arising, now thou stand'st to view  
In the broad noon of his magnificence.

63

I LIVE on hope and that I think do all  
Who come into this world, and since I see  
Myself in swim with such good company,  
I take my comfort whatsoe'er befall.  
I abide and abide, as if more stout and tall  
My spirit would grow by waiting like a tree ;  
And, clear of others' toil, it pleaseth me  
In dreams their quick ambition to forestall.

And if thro' careless eagerness I slide  
To some accomplishment, I give my voice  
Still to desire, and in desire abide.  
I have no stake abroad ; if I rejoice  
In what is done or doing, I confide  
Neither to friend nor foe my secret choice.

## *The Growth of Love*

64

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The purchase of those tears, the world's disdain,  
Doth Love still with his war your peace annoy,  
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In flowers and leafy trees, when solemn night  
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What make ye and what strive for? keep ye thought  
Of us, or in new excellence divine  
Is old forgot? or do ye count for nought  
What the Greek did and what the Florentine?

We keep your memories well: O in your store  
Live not our best joys treasured evermore?

65

AH heavenly joy! But who hath ever heard,  
Who hath seen joy, or who shall ever find  
Joy's language? There is neither speech nor word;  
Nought but itself to teach it to mankind.

Scarce in our twenty thousand painful days  
We may touch something: but there lives—beyond  
The best of art, or nature's kindest phase—  
The hope whereof our spirit is fain and fond:

The cause of beauty given to man's desires  
Writ in the expectancy of starry skies,  
The faith which gloweth in our fleeting fires,  
The aim of all the good that here we prize;

Which but to love, pursue and pray for well  
Maketh earth heaven, and to forget it, hell.



## *The Growth of Love*

66

My wearied heart, whenever, after all,  
Its loves and yearnings shall be told complete,  
When gentle death shall bid it cease to beat,  
And from all dear illusions disenthral :  
However then thou shalt appear to call  
My fearful heart, since down at others' feet  
It bade me kneel so oft, I'll not retreat  
From thee, nor fear before thy feet to fall.

And I shall say, 'Receive this loving heart  
Which err'd in sorrow only ; and in sin  
Took no delight ; but being forced apart  
From thee, without thee hoping thee to win,  
Most prized what most thou madest as thou art  
On earth, till heaven were open to enter in.'

67

DREARY was winter, wet with changeful sting  
Of clinging snowfall and fast-flying frost ;  
And bitterer northwinds then withheld the spring,  
That dallied with her promise till 'twas lost.

A sunless and half-hearted summer drown'd  
The flowers in needful and unwelcom'd rain ;  
And Autumn with a sad smile fled uncrown'd  
From fruitless orchards and unripen'd grain.

But could the skies of this most desolate year  
In its last month learn with our love to glow,  
Men yet should rank its cloudless atmosphere  
Above the sunsets of five years ago :

Of my great praise too part should be its own,  
Now reckon'd peerless for thy love alone.

## *The Growth of Love*

68

AWAY now, lovely Muse, roam and be free :  
Our commerce ends for aye, thy task is done :  
Tho' to win thee I left all else unwon,  
Thou, whom I most have won, art not for me.  
My first desire, thou too forgone must be,  
Thou too, O much lamented now, tho' none  
Will turn to pity thy forsaken son,  
Nor thy divine sisters will weep for thee.

None will weep for thee : thou return, O Muse,  
To thy Sicilian fields : I once have been  
On thy loved hills, and where thou first didst use  
Thy sweetly balanced rhyme, O thankless queen,  
Have pluck'd and wreath'd thy flowers ; but do thou choose  
Some happier brow to wear thy garlands green.

69

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,  
In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,  
To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,  
Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.  
Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state,  
That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve  
Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,  
Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread :  
And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin,  
Even as our anger soon is past and dead  
Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin :  
By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,  
And in the vale of terror comforted.



# SHORTER POEMS

*in Five Books*



## PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *Bks. I-IV*. Clarendon Press. Geo. Bell & Sons, Oct. 1890.

Reprinted, Nov. 1890, 1891, 1894.

2. *Bks. I-V*. Private Press of H. Daniel. Oxford, 1894.

3. *Do. do.* Clarendon Press. George Bell & Sons, 1896.

4. Cheap issue of 3. 1899. Reprinted, 1899.

5. *Poetical works* of R. B. Smith, Elder & Co., 1899, vol. II.

*An account of earlier issues of first four books is given in notes at end of Vol. II of Poetical Works.*

# SHORTER POEMS

## BOOK I

DEDICATED TO H. E. W.

### I

#### ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream !  
Known and loved so long,  
That hast heard the song  
And the idle dream  
Of my boyish day ;  
While I once again  
Down thy margin stray,  
In the selfsame strain  
Still my voice is spent,  
With my old lament  
And my idle dream,  
Clear and gentle stream !

Where my old seat was  
Here again I sit,  
Where the long boughs knit  
Over stream and grass  
A translucent eaves :

## *Shorter Poems*

Where back eddies play  
Shipwreck with the leaves,  
And the proud swans stray,  
Sailing one by one  
Out of stream and sun,  
And the fish lie cool  
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon  
Of the summer day  
Dreaming here I lay ;  
And I know how soon,  
Idly at its hour,  
First the deep bell hums  
From the minster tower,  
And then evening comes,  
Creeping up the glade,  
With her lengthening shade,  
And the tardy boon  
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream !  
Ere again I go  
Where thou dost not flow,  
Well does it beseem  
Thee to hear again  
Once my youthful song,  
That familiar strain  
Silent now so long :  
Be as I content  
With my old lament  
And my idle dream,  
Clear and gentle stream.

# *Book I*

## 2

### ELEGY

THE wood is bare : a river-mist is steeping  
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves :  
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping  
Over their fallen leaves ;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,  
Miry and matted in the soaking wet :  
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten  
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,  
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade :—  
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,  
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener ;  
And now, in this disconsolate decay,  
I come to see her where I most have seen her,  
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,  
The fancy of her figure on me falls :  
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,  
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,  
A path of memory, that is all her own :  
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing  
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches  
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head ;  
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,  
For the year's sun is dead.



## *Shorter Poems*

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:  
And birds that love the South have taken wing.  
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,  
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

### 3

POOR withered rose and dry,  
Skeleton of a rose,  
Risen to testify  
To love's sad close :  
Treasured for love's sweet sake,  
That of joy past  
Thou might'st again awake  
Memory at last.  
Yet is thy perfume sweet ;  
Thy petals red  
Yet tell of summer heat,  
And the gay bed :  
Yet, yet recall the glow  
Of the gazing sun,  
When at thy bush we two  
Joined hands in one.  
But, rose, thou hast not seen,  
Thou hast not wept  
The change that passed between,  
Whilst thou hast slept.  
To me thou seemest yet  
The dead dream's thrall :  
While I live and forget  
Dream, truth and all.  
Thou art more fresh than I,  
Rose, sweet and red :  
Salt on my pale cheeks lie  
The tears I shed.

# Book I

## 4

### THE CLIFF-TOP

THE cliff-top has a carpet  
Of lilac, gold and green :  
The blue sky bounds the ocean,  
The white clouds scud between.

A flock of gulls are wheeling  
And wailing round my seat ;  
Above my head the heaven,  
The sea beneath my feet.

### THE OCEAN.

Were I a cloud I'd gather  
My skirts up in the air,  
And fly I well know whither,  
And rest I well know where.

As pointed the star surely,  
The legend tells of old,  
Where the wise kings might offer  
Myrrh, frankincense, and gold ;

Above the house I'd hover  
Where dwells my love, and wait  
Till haply I might spy her  
Throw back the garden-gate.

There in the summer evening  
I would bedeck the moon ;  
I would float down and screen her  
From the sun's rays at noon ;

And if her flowers should languish,  
Or wither in the drought  
Upon her tall white lilies  
I'd pour my heart's blood out :

## Shorter Poems

So if she wore one only,  
And shook not out the rain,  
Were I a cloud, O cloudlet,  
I had not lived in vain.

[*A cloud speaks.*]

### A CLOUD.

But were I thou, O ocean,  
I would not chafe and fret  
As thou, because a limit  
To thy desires is set.

I would be blue, and gentle,  
Patient, and calm, and see  
If my smiles might not tempt her,  
My love, to come to me.

I'd make my depths transparent,  
And still, that she should lean  
O'er the boat's edge to ponder  
The sights that swam between.

I would command strange creatures,  
Of bright hue and quick fin,  
To stir the water near her,  
And tempt her bare arm in.

I'd teach her spend the summer  
With me : and I can tell,  
That, were I thou, O ocean,  
My love should love me well.

\*

\*

But on the mad cloud scudded,  
The breeze it blew so stiff ;  
And the sad ocean bellowed,  
And pounded at the cliff.

:

## *Book I*

### 5

I HEARD a linnet courting  
His lady in the spring :  
His mates were idly sporting,  
Nor stayed to hear him sing  
His song of love.—  
I fear my speech distorting  
His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading  
Were full of young delight ;  
And she that gave him heeding  
Interpreted aright  
His gay, sweet notes,—  
So sadly marred in the reading,—  
His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer  
Awaited the refrain,  
Till swiftly perching nearer  
He sang his song again,  
His pretty song :—  
Would that my verse spake clearer  
His tender song !

Ye happy, airy creatures !  
That in the merry spring  
Think not of what misfeatures  
Or cares the year may bring ;  
But unto love  
Resign your simple natures  
To tender love.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 6

DEAR lady, when thou frownest,  
And my true love despisest,  
And all thy vows disownest  
That sealed my venture wisest ;  
I think thy pride's displeasure  
Neglects a matchless treasure  
Exceeding price and measure.

But when again thou smilest,  
And love for love returnest,  
And fear with joy beguilest,  
And takest truth in earnest ;  
Then, though I sheer adore thee,  
The sum of my love for thee  
Seems poor, scant, and unworthy.

### 7

I WILL not let thee go.  
Ends all our month-long love in this?  
Can it be summed up so,  
Quit in a single kiss?  
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,  
As the soft south can blow  
And toss the feathered seeds,  
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
Had not the great sun seen, I might ;  
Or were he reckoned slow  
To bring the false to light,  
Then might I let thee go.

## *Book I*

I will not let thee go.  
The stars that crowd the summer skies  
Have watched us so below  
With all their million eyes,  
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
Have we not chid the changeful moon,  
Now rising late, and now  
Because she set too soon,  
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.  
Have not the young flowers been content,  
Plucked ere their buds could blow,  
To seal our sacrament?  
I cannot let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
I hold thee by too many bands:  
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!  
I have thee by the hands,  
And will not let thee go.

### 8

I FOUND to-day out walking  
The flower my love loves best.  
What, when I stooped to pluck it,  
Could dare my hand arrest?

Was it a snake lay curling  
About the root's thick crown?  
Or did some hidden bramble  
Tear my hand reaching down?

There was no snake uncurling,  
And no thorn wounded me;  
'Twas my heart checked me, sighing  
She is beyond the sea.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,  
Bursts her twin cup in summer late :  
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,  
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought,  
In wonder if they care that she  
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught  
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,  
That dances with the noble corn :  
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,  
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

### 10

SOMETIMES when my lady sits by me  
My rapture's so great, that I tear  
My mind from the thought that she's nigh me,  
And strive to forget that she's there.  
And sometimes when she is away  
Her absence so sorely does try me,  
That I shut to my eyes, and assay  
To think she is there sitting by me.

## *Book I*

### I I

LONG are the hours the sun is above,  
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,  
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

She does not meet me upon the stair,—  
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :  
I always walk straight up to my love ;

And she lets me take my wonted place  
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face.

There as I sit, from her head thrown back  
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,  
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear,  
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,  
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,  
The firelight hours are a dream of gold.

And so I sit here night by night,  
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair  
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay :  
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,  
That I sit so much by myself alone.



## *Shorter Poems*

### I 2

Who has not walked upon the shore,  
And who does not the morning know,  
The day the angry gale is o'er,  
The hour the wind has ceased to blow?

The horses of the strong south-west  
Are pastured round his tropic tent,  
Careless how long the ocean's breast  
Sob on and sigh for passion spent.

The frightened birds, that fled inland  
To house in rock and tower and tree,  
Are gathering on the peaceful strand,  
To tempt again the sunny sea ;

Whereon the timid ships steal out  
And laugh to find their foe asleep,  
That lately scattered them about,  
And drave them to the fold like sheep.

The snow-white clouds he northward chased  
Break into phalanx, line, and band :  
All one way to the south they haste,  
The south, their pleasant fatherland.

From distant hills their shadows creep,  
Arrive in turn and mount the lea,  
And flit across the downs, and leap  
Sheer off the cliff upon the sea ;

And sail and sail far out of sight.  
But still I watch their fleecy trains,  
That piling all the south with light,  
Dapple in France the fertile plains.

# *Book I*

## 13

I MADE another song,  
In likeness of my love :  
And sang it all day long,  
Around, beneath, above ;  
I told my secret out,  
That none might be in doubt.

I sang it to the sky,  
That veiled his face to hear  
How far her azure eye  
Outdoes his splendid sphere ;  
But at her eyelids' name  
His white clouds fled for shame.

I told it to the trees,  
And to the flowers confest,  
And said not one of these  
Is like my lily drest ;  
Nor spathe nor petal dared  
Vie with her body bared.

I shouted to the sea,  
That set his waves a-prance ;  
Her floating hair is free,  
Free are her feet to dance ;  
And for thy wrath, I swear  
Her frown is more to fear.

And as in happy mood  
I walked and sang alone,  
At eve beside the wood  
I met my love, my own :  
And sang to her the song  
I had sung all day long.

## *Shorter Poems*

14

### ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER  
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,  
And all ye loves, assemble ; far and wide  
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before  
Has been deferred to this late eventide :  
    For on this night the bride,  
    The days of her betrothal over,  
    Leaves the parental hearth for evermore ;  
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain  
    Yet all unvisited, the silken gown :  
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain  
    Her dearer friends provided : sere and brown  
    Bring out the festal crown,  
    And set it on her forehead lightly :  
    Though it be withered, twine no wreath again ;  
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,  
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,  
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,  
While her attendants, chosen from among  
    Her faithful virgin throng,  
    May lay her in her cedar litter,  
    Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,  
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.

## *Book I*

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be  
Not without music, nor with these alone ;  
But let the viol lead the melody,  
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan  
    Of sinking semitone ;  
    And, all in choir, the virgin voices  
    Rest not from singing in skilled harmony  
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,  
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,  
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night,  
And then the maidens, in a double row,  
    Each singing soft and low,  
    And each on high a torch upstaying :  
    Unto her lover lead her forth with light,  
With music, and with singing, and with praying.

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,  
And found her trusty window open wide,  
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,  
That long the restless curtain would not hide  
    Her form that stood beside ;  
    As scarce she dared to be delighted,  
    Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame  
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass  
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn :  
And watching she has seen no shadow pass  
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne  
    Upon her ear forlorn.  
    In vain has she looked out to greet him ;  
    He has not come, he will not come, alas !  
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

## *Shorter Poems*

Now to the river bank the priests are come :  
The bark is ready to receive its freight :  
Let some prepare her place therein, and some  
Embark the litter with its slender weight :

    The rest stand by in state,  
    And sing her a safe passage over ;  
While she is oared across to her new home,  
Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thou, O lover, that art on the watch,  
Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,  
The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch  
The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

    Thou, when the torchlight gleams,  
    When thou shalt see the slow procession,  
And when thine ears the fitful music catch,  
Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

### 15

#### RONDEAU

His poisoned shafts, that fresh he dips  
In juice of plants that no bee sips,  
He takes, and with his bow renown'd  
Goes out upon his hunting ground,  
Hanging his quiver at his hips.

He draws them one by one, and clips  
Their heads between his finger-tips,  
And looses with a twanging sound  
His poisoned shafts.

But if a maiden with her lips  
Suck from the wound the blood that drips,  
And drink the poison from the wound,  
The simple remedy is found  
That of their deadly terror strips  
His poisoned shafts.

## *Book I*

16

### TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess  
That Love would prove so hard a master ;  
Of more than common friendliness  
When first we met we did not guess.  
Who could foretell this sore distress,  
This irretrievable disaster  
When first we met ?—We did not guess  
That Love would prove so hard a master.

17

### TRIOLET

ALL women born are so perverse  
No man need boast their love possessing.  
If nought seem better, nothing's worse :  
All women born are so perverse.  
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse  
Though God had made her for a blessing,  
All women born are so perverse  
No man need boast their love possessing.

# *Shorter Poems*

## BOOK II

TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
G. M. H.

I

MUSE.

WILL Love again awake,  
That lies asleep so long?

POET.

O hush! ye tongues that shake  
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE.

It is a lady fair  
Whom once he deigned to praise,  
That at the door doth dare  
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET.

She must be fair of face,  
As bold of heart she seems,  
If she would match her grace  
With the delight of dreams.

## *Book II*

MUSE.

Her beauty would surprise  
Gazers on Autumn eves,  
Who watched the broad moon rise  
Upon the scattered sheaves.

POET.

O sweet must be the voice  
He shall descend to hear,  
Who doth in Heaven rejoice  
His most enchanted ear.

MUSE.

The smile, that rests to play  
Upon her lip, foretells  
What musical array  
Tricks her sweet syllables

POET.

And yet her smiles have danced  
In vain, if her discourse  
Win not the soul entranced  
In divine intercourse.

MUSE.

She will encounter all  
This trial without shame,  
Her eyes men Beauty call,  
And Wisdom is her name.

POET.

Throw back the portals then,  
Ye guards, your watch that keep,  
Love will awake again  
That lay so long asleep.



## *Shorter Poems*

### 2

#### A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
    Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,  
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,  
    Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
    Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,  
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,  
    Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,  
    Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air :  
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,  
    And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,  
    Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare ;  
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,  
        grandest  
    Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair  
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,  
    I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine  
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,  
    Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.  
    But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,  
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,  
    From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line  
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

## *Book II*

### 3

#### LATE SPRING EVENING

I SAW the Virgin-mother clad in green,  
Walking the sprinkled meadows at sundown ;  
While yet the moon's cold flame was hung between  
The day and night, above the dusky town :  
I saw her brighter than the Western gold,  
Whereto she faced in splendour to behold.

Her dress was greener than the tenderest leaf  
That trembled in the sunset glare aglow :  
Herself more delicate than is the brief,  
Pink apple-blossom, that May showers lay low,  
And more delicious than 's the earliest streak  
The blushing rose shows of her crimson cheek.

As if to match the sight that so did please,  
A music entered, making passion fain :  
Three nightingales sat singing in the trees,  
And praised the Goddess for the fallen rain ;  
Which yet their unseen motions did arouse,  
Or parting Zephyrs shook out from the boughs.

And o'er the treetops, scattered in mid air,  
The exhausted clouds laden with crimson light  
Floated, or seemed to sleep ; and, highest there,  
One planet broke the lingering ranks of night ;  
Daring day's company, so he might spy  
The Virgin-queen once with his watchful eye.

## *Shorter Poems*

And when I saw her, then I worshipped her,  
And said,—O bounteous Spring, O beauteous Spring,  
Mother of all my years, thou who dost stir  
My heart to adore thee and my tongue to sing,  
Flower of my fruit, of my heart's blood the fire,  
Of all my satisfaction the desire !

How art thou every year more beautiful,  
Younger for all the winters thou hast cast:  
And I, for all my love grows, grow more dull,  
Decaying with each season overpast !  
In vain to teach him love must man employ thee,  
The more he learns the less he can enjoy thee.

### 4

#### WOOING

I KNOW not how I came,  
New on my knightly journey,  
To win the fairest dame  
That graced my maiden tourney.

Chivalry's lovely prize  
With all men's gaze upon her,  
Why did she free her eyes  
On me, to do me honour ?

Ah ! ne'er had I my mind  
With such high hope delighted,  
Had she not first inclined,  
And with her eyes invited.

But never doubt I knew,  
Having their glance to cheer me,  
Until the day joy grew  
Too great, too sure, too near me.

## *Book II*

When hope a fear became,  
And passion, grown too tender,  
Now trembled at the shame  
Of a despised surrender ;

And where my love at first  
Saw kindness in her smiling,  
I read her pride, and cursed  
The arts of her beguiling.

Till winning less than won,  
And liker wooed than wooing,  
Too late I turned undone  
Away from my undoing ;

And stood beside the door,  
Whereto she followed, making  
My hard leave-taking more  
Hard by her sweet leave-taking.

Her speech would have betrayed  
Her thought, had mine been colder :  
Her eyes' distress had made  
A lesser lover bolder.

But no ! Fond heart, distrust,  
Cried Wisdom, and consider :  
Go free, since go thou must :—  
And so farewell I bid her.

And brisk upon my way  
I smote the stroke to sever,  
And should have lost that day  
My life's delight for ever :

But when I saw her start  
And turn aside and tremble ;—  
Ah ! she was true, her heart  
I knew did not dissemble.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 5

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,  
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :  
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems  
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

    Straight trees in every place  
    Their thick tops interlace,  
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine  
    Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :  
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,  
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes  
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

    His winter floods lay bare  
    The stout roots in the air :  
His summer streams are cool, when they have played  
    Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,  
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace  
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
Robbing the golden market of the bees :

    And laden barges float  
    By banks of myosote ;  
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys  
    Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool  
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass  
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,  
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;  
    Where spreading crowfoot mars  
    The drowning nenuphars,  
Waving the tassels of her silken grass  
    Below her silver stars.

## *Book II*

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,  
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;  
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows  
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:  
    Yet should her roots but try  
    Within these deeps to lie,  
Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold  
    Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;  
    And dreams, or falls asleep,  
    While curious fishes peep  
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully  
    Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,  
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care  
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,  
May by the pathway of the forest fare :  
    As from a buried day  
    Across the mind will stray  
Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware  
    He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,  
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :  
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe  
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;  
    Or watch, as fades the light,  
    The gibbous moon grow bright,  
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,  
    And glorify the night.

## *Shorter Poems*

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames ?  
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !  
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,  
No sharer of my secret I allow :  
    Lest ere I come the while  
    Strange feet your shades defile ;  
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow  
    Within your guardian isle.

### 6

#### A WATER-PARTY

LET us, as by this verdant bank we float,  
Search down the marge to find some shady pool  
Where we may rest awhile and moor our boat,  
And bathe our tired limbs in the waters cool.  
    Beneath the noonday sun,  
    Swiftly, O river, run !  
Here is a mirror for Narcissus, see !  
I cannot sound it, plumbing with my oar.  
Lay the stern in beneath this bowering tree !  
Now, stepping on this stump, we are ashore.  
    Guard, Hamadryades,  
    Our clothes laid by your trees !  
How the birds warble in the woods ! I pick  
The waxen lilies, diving to the root.  
But swim not far in the stream, the weeds grow thick,  
And hot on the bare head the sunbeams shoot.  
    Until our sport be done,  
    O merry birds, sing on !  
If but to-night the sky be clear, the moon  
Will serve us well, for she is near the full.  
We shall row safely home ; only too soon,—  
So pleasant 'tis, whether we float or pull.  
    To guide us through the night,  
    O summer moon, shine bright !

## *Book II*

### 7

#### THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;  
O still solitude, only matched in the skies :  
    Perilous in steep places,  
    Soft in the level races,  
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies;  
With lovely undulation of fall and rise;  
    Entrenched with thickets thorned,  
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned !

I climb your crown, and lo ! a sight surprising  
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide :  
    And scattered ships ascending  
    To heaven, lost in the blending  
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,  
Urging their engines against wind and tide,  
    And all so small and slow  
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,  
Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,  
    Takes my ear, in the veering  
    Baffled wind, as rearing  
Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;  
And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;  
    While again at the foot of the downs  
He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.



# *Shorter Poems*

## 8

### SPRING

#### ODE I

##### INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY

AGAIN with pleasant green  
Has Spring renewed the wood,  
And where the bare trunks stood  
Are leafy arbours seen ;  
And back on budding boughs  
Come birds, to court and pair,  
Whose rival amorous vows  
Amaze the scented air.

The freshets are unbound,  
And leaping from the hill,  
Their mossy banks refill  
With streams of light and sound :  
And scattered down the meads,  
From hour to hour unfold  
A thousand buds and beads  
In stars and cups of gold.

Now hear, and see, and note,  
The farms are all astir,  
And every labourer  
Has doffed his winter coat ;  
And how with specks of white  
They dot the brown hillside,  
Or jaunt and sing outright  
As by their teams they stride.

## *Book II*

They sing to feel the Sun  
Regain his wanton strength ;  
To know the year at length  
Rewards their labour done ;  
To see the rootless stake  
They set bare in the ground,  
Burst into leaf, and shake  
Its grateful scent around.

Ah now an evil lot  
Is his, who toils for gain,  
Where crowded chimneys stain  
The heavens his choice forgot ;  
'Tis on the blighted trees  
That deck his garden dim,  
And in the tainted breeze,  
That sweet Spring comes to him.

Far sooner I would choose  
The life of brutes that bask,  
Than set myself a task,  
Which inborn powers refuse :  
And rather far enjoy  
The body, than invent  
A duty, to destroy  
The ease which nature sent ;

And country life I praise,  
And lead, because I find  
The philosophic mind  
Can take no middle ways ;  
She will not leave her love  
To mix with men, her art  
Is all to strive above  
The crowd, or stand apart.

## *Shorter Poems*

Thrice happy he, the rare  
Prometheus, who can play  
With hidden things, and lay  
New realms of nature bare ;  
Whose venturous step has trod  
Hell underfoot, and won  
A crown from man and God  
For all that he has done.—

That highest gift of all,  
Since crabbèd fate did flood  
My heart with sluggish blood,  
I look not mine to call ;  
But, like a truant freed,  
Fly to the woods, and claim  
A pleasure for the deed  
Of my inglorious name :

And am content, denied  
The best, in choosing right ;  
For Nature can delight  
Fancies unoccupied  
With ecstasies so sweet  
As none can even guess,  
Who walk not with the feet  
Of joy in idleness.

Then leave your joyless ways,  
My friend, my joys to see.  
The day you come shall be  
The choice of chosen days :  
You shall be lost, and learn  
New being, and forget  
The world, till your return  
Shall bring your first regret.

# *Book II*

9

## SPRING

ODE II

REPLY

BEHOLD ! the radiant Spring,  
In splendour decked anew,  
Down from her heaven of blue  
Returns on sunlit wing :  
The zephyrs of her train  
In fleecy clouds disport,  
And birds to greet her reign  
Summon their silvan court.

And here in street and square  
The prisoned trees contest  
Her favour with the best,  
To robe themselves full fair :  
And forth their buds provoke,  
Forgetting winter brown,  
And all the mire and smoke  
That wrapped the dingy town.

Now he that loves indeed  
His pleasure must awake,  
Lest any pleasure take  
Its flight, and he not heed ;  
For of his few short years  
Another now invites  
His hungry soul, and cheers  
His life with new delights.

## *Shorter Poems*

And who loves Nature more  
Than he, whose painful art  
Has taught and skilled his heart  
To read her skill and lore?  
Whose spirit leaps more high,  
Plucking the pale primrose,  
Than his whose feet must fly  
The pasture where it grows?

One long in city pent  
Forgets, or must complain:  
But think not I can stain  
My heaven with discontent;  
Nor wallow with that sad,  
Backsliding herd, who cry  
That Truth must make man bad,  
And pleasure is a lie.

Rather while Reason lives  
To mark me from the beast,  
I'll teach her serve at least  
To heal the wound she gives:  
Nor need she strain her powers  
Beyond a common flight,  
To make the passing hours  
Happy from morn till night.

Since health our toil rewards,  
And strength is labour's prize,  
I hate not, nor despise  
The work my lot accords;  
Nor fret with fears unkind  
The tender joys, that bless  
My hard-won peace of mind,  
In hours of idleness.

## *Book II*

Then what charm company  
Can give, know I,—if wine  
Go round, or throats combine  
To set dumb music free.  
Or deep in wintertide  
When winds without make moan,  
I love my own fireside  
Not least when most alone.

Then oft I turn the page  
In which our country's name,  
Spoiling the Greek of fame,  
Shall sound in every age :  
Or some Terentian play  
Renew, whose excellent  
Adjusted folds betray  
How once Menander went.

Or if grave study suit  
The yet unwearied brain,  
Plato can teach again,  
And Socrates dispute ;  
Till fancy in a dream  
Confront their souls with mine,  
Crowning the mind supreme,  
And her delights divine.

While pleasure yet can be  
Pleasant, and fancy sweet,  
I bid all care retreat  
From my philosophy ;  
Which, when I come to try  
Your simpler life, will find,  
I doubt not, joys to vie  
With those I leave behind.

## *Shorter Poems*

IO

### ELEGY

#### AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews  
I come, unquiet sorrows to control;  
Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse  
With my neglected solitary soul;  
And to poetic sadness care confide,  
Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide :  
They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,  
Among the tombs finding my rare delight,  
Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,  
Or in the windy moon-enchanted night,  
Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,  
And given them water from the well divine.—

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun  
Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;  
The seeds are perfected : his work is done,  
And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May;  
Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear  
Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,  
The world my solemn fancy leaves behind,  
Come ! pass within the inviolable wall,  
Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind;  
Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,  
And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears;  
For many eyes have sanctified this spot,  
Where grief's unbroken lineage endears  
The charm untimely Folly injures not,  
And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap  
The simple fence its holiness doth keep.

## *Book II*

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,  
Their pompous legends will no smile awake ;  
Even the vainglorious title o'er the head  
Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake ;  
And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize,  
Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,  
Here where a lover left his bride, below  
The treasured names their own are added on  
To those whom they have followed long ago :  
Sealing the record of the tears they shed,  
That ' where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

Grandfather, father, son, and then again  
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath  
Numbered in turn among the sons of men,  
And gathered each one in his turn to death :  
While he that occupies their house and name  
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits ? Ah ! could we tell  
The manner of our being when we die,  
And see beyond the scene we know so well  
The country that so much obscured doth lie !  
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,  
Or crown our melancholy with despair ;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come :  
Since of this world the essential joy must fall  
In all distributed, in each thing some,  
In nothing all, and all complete in all ;  
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,  
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace.



## *Shorter Poems*

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,  
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here :  
Though in most black habiliments attired,  
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.  
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit  
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet  
Back to the busy town return, but yet  
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,  
Or touch their hands, or share without regret  
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties  
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

### II

## DEJECTION

WHEREFORE to-night so full of care,  
My soul, revolving hopeless strife,  
Pointing at hindrance, and the bare  
Painful escapes of fitful life?

Shaping the doom that may befall  
By precedent of terror past :  
By love dishonoured, and the call  
Of friendship slighted at the last?

By treasured names, the little store  
That memory out of wreck could save  
Of loving hearts, that gone before  
Call their old comrade to the grave?

O soul, be patient : thou shalt find  
A little matter mend all this ;  
Some strain of music to thy mind,  
Some praise for skill not spent amiss.

## *Book II*

Again shall pleasure overflow  
Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste  
Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow  
Half sad for sweetness run to waste.

O happy life ! I hear thee sing,  
O rare delight of mortal stuff !  
I praise my days for all they bring,  
Yet are they only not enough.

### 12

#### MORNING HYMN

O GOLDEN Sun, whose ray  
My path illumineth :  
Light of the circling day,  
Whose night is birth and death :

That dost not stint the prime  
Of wise and strong, nor stay  
The changeful ordering time,  
That brings their sure decay :

Though thou, the central sphere,  
Dost seem to turn around  
Thy creature world, and near  
As father fond art found ;

Thereon, as from above  
To shine, and make rejoice  
With beauty, life, and love,  
The garden of thy choice,

## *Shorter Poems*

To dress the jocund Spring  
With bounteous promise gay  
Of hotter months, that bring  
The full perfected day;

To touch with richest gold  
The ripe fruit, ere it fall;  
And smile through cloud and cold  
On Winter's funeral.

Now with resplendent flood  
Gladden my waking eyes,  
And stir my slothful blood  
To joyous enterprise.

Arise, arise, as when  
At first God said **LIGHT BE!**  
That He might make us men  
With eyes His light to see.

Scatter the clouds that hide  
The face of heaven, and show  
Where sweet Peace doth abide,  
Where Truth and Beauty grow.

Awaken, cheer, adorn,  
Invite, inspire, assure  
The joys that praise thy morn,  
The toil thy noons mature :

And soothe the eve of day,  
That darkens back to death ;  
O golden Sun, whose ray  
Our path illumineth !

## *Book II*

### 13

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,  
Within whose magic tents  
Rich hues have marriage made  
With sweet unmemoried scents :  
A honeymoon delight,—  
A joy of love at sight,  
That ages in an hour :—  
My song be like a flower !

I have loved airs, that die  
Before their charm is writ  
Along a liquid sky  
Trembling to welcome it.  
Notes, that with pulse of fire  
Proclaim the spirit's desire,  
Then die, and are nowhere :—  
My song be like an air !

Die, song, die like a breath,  
And wither as a bloom :  
Fear not a flowery death,  
Dread not an airy tomb !  
Fly with delight, fly hence !  
'Twas thine love's tender sense  
To feast ; now on thy bier  
Beauty shall shed a tear.

# *Shorter Poems*

## BOOK III

TO

R. W. D.

### I

O MY vague desires !  
Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires :  
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime  
Rising and flying to heaven before her time :

What doth tempt you forth  
To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north ?  
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,  
Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying ?

Joy, the joy of flight !  
They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night ;  
Gone up, gone out of sight : and ever again  
Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah ! they burn my soul,  
The fires, devour my soul that once was whole :  
She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day,  
But whither, whither ? ay whither ? away, away !

Could I but control  
These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul :  
Could I but quench the fire : ah ! could I stay  
My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away !

## *Book III*

### 2

#### LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
    Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;  
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;  
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :  
    Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing ;  
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.  
    All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;  
    And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness  
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :  
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness ;  
    The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;  
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.  
    Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,  
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze  
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing ;  
    Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;  
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,  
'O look at the trees !' they cried, 'O look at the trees !'  
    With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,  
Following along the white deserted way,  
A country company long dispersed asunder :  
    When now already the sun, in pale display  
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below  
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

## *Shorter Poems*

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow ;  
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,  
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go :  
But even for them awhile no cares encumber  
Their minds diverted ; the daily word is unspoken,  
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber  
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm  
they have broken.

### 3

#### THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling  
A silver field afar in the mournful sea,  
The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing  
At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea :  
Whose smile severe and chaste  
June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.  
In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever :  
In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah ! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean  
Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides ;  
Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion  
Precipitate all o'errides, and turns, nor abides :  
For you sad birds and fair,  
Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air ;  
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames valley,  
The silent river glides by flowery banks :  
And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley  
Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks :  
Where if a light air stray,  
'Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

### *Book III*

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever :  
Serve thy sweet desire : despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entrancèd river,  
That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,  
Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;  
Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them :  
For you my bowers green,  
My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between,  
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

#### 4

#### ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
With promise of strength and manhood full and fair !  
Though cold and stark and bare,  
The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ;—alas ! no longer  
To visit her heart with wondrous joy ; to be  
Thy father's pride ;—ah, he  
Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond ;  
Startling my fancy fond  
With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it :  
But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff ;  
Yet feels to my hand as if  
'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.



## *Shorter Poems*

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—  
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed !—  
Propping thy wise, sad head,  
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.  
So quiet ! doth the change content thee ?—Death, whither  
hath he taken thee ?  
To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this ?  
The vision of which I miss,  
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and  
awaken thee ?  
Ah ! little at best can all our hopes avail us  
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,  
Unwilling, alone we embark,  
And the things we have seen and have known and have  
heard of, fail us.

### 5

#### THE PHILOSOPHER TO HIS MISTRESS

BECAUSE thou canst not see,  
Because thou canst not know  
The black and hopeless woe  
That hath encompassed me :  
Because, should I confess  
The thought of my despair,  
My words would wound thee less  
Than swords can hurt the air :  
Because with thee I seem  
As one invited near  
To taste the faery cheer  
Of spirits in a dream ;  
Of whom he knoweth nought  
Save that they vie to make  
All motion, voice and thought  
A pleasure for his sake :

### *Book III*

Therefore more sweet and strange  
Has been the mystery  
Of thy long love to me,  
That doth not quit, nor change,  
Nor tax my solemn heart,  
That kisseth in a gloom,  
Knowing not who thou art  
That givest, nor to whom.

Therefore the tender touch  
Is more ; more dear the smile :  
And thy light words beguile  
My wisdom overmuch :  
And O with swiftness fly  
The fancies of my song  
To happy worlds, where I  
Still in thy love belong.

#### 6

HASTE on, my joys ! your treasure lies  
In swift, unceasing flight.  
O haste : for while your beauty flies  
I seize your full delight.  
Lo ! I have seen the scented flower,  
Whose tender stems I cull,  
For her brief date and meted hour  
Appear more beautiful.  
O youth, O strength, O most divine  
For that so short ye prove ;  
Were but your rare gifts longer mine,  
Ye scarce would win my love.  
Nay, life itself the heart would spurn,  
Did once the days restore  
The days, that once enjoyed return,  
Return—ah ! nevermore.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 7

#### INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day  
Had verged already on its hot decline,  
And charmed Indolence in languor lay  
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine :  
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream !'  
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed  
Upon our proposed travel well begun,  
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,  
Past shallow islets floating in the sun,  
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers  
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home  
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered  
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam,  
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared  
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay  
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,  
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass  
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,  
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass ;  
And pulling for the middle span, we drew  
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below !  
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played  
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,  
And with its easy flood no murmur made :  
And weeds spread on its surface, and about  
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out.

### *Book III*

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood  
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove  
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood  
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove :  
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank,  
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,  
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean ;  
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,  
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green ;  
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base  
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs  
All windowless, neglected and awry,  
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks ;  
And here and there an unused door, set high  
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,  
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,  
With empty boats and barges moored along,  
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,  
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.  
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,  
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip  
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more ;  
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,  
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore ;  
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,  
Between the dim reflections floating by.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 8

I PRAISE the tender flower,  
That on a mournful day  
Bloomed in my garden bower  
And made the winter gay.  
Its loveliness contented  
My heart tormented.

I praise the gentle maid  
Whose happy voice and smile  
To confidence betrayed  
My doleful heart awhile :  
And gave my spirit deploring  
Fresh wings for soaring.

The maid for very fear  
Of love I durst not tell :  
The rose could never hear,  
Though I bespake her well :  
So in my song I bind them  
For all to find them.

### 9

A WINTER'S night with the snow about :  
'Twas silent within and cold without :  
Both father and mother to bed were gone :  
The son sat yet by the fire alone.

He gazed on the fire, and dreamed again  
Of one that was now no more among men :  
As still he sat and never aware  
How close was the spirit beside his chair.

### *Book III*

Nay, sad were his thoughts, for he wept and said  
Ah, woe for the dead ! ah, woe for the dead !  
How heavy the earth lies now on her breast,  
The lips that I kissed, and the hand I pressed.

The spirit he saw not, he could not hear  
The comforting word she spake in his ear :  
His heart in the grave with her mouldering clay  
No welcome gave—and she fled away.

#### IO

My bed and pillow are cold,  
My heart is faint with dread,  
The air hath an odour of mould,  
I dream I lie with the dead :

I cannot move,  
O come to me, Love,  
Or else I am dead.

The feet I hear on the floor  
Tread heavily overhead :  
O Love, come down to the door,  
Come, Love, come, ere I be dead :  
Make shine thy light,  
O Love, in the night ;  
Or else I am dead.

#### II

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest  
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest  
In fancy rising now to re-awaken  
My love unshaken ;

All thou'st forgotten, but no change can free thee,  
No hate unmake thee ; as thou wert I see thee,  
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting  
Its ample greeting.

## *Shorter Poems*

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly  
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy,  
The only joy of all the joys I cherished  
That hast not perished,

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,  
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure :  
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest,  
Me thou delightest?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,  
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,  
And faery fancy leaves her habitation  
To desolation.

Of two things open left for lovers parted  
'Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted :  
But I would ever dream I still possess it,  
And thus caress it.

### I 2

THOU didst delight my eyes :  
Yet who am I ? nor first  
Nor last nor best, that durst  
Once dream of thee for prize ;  
Nor this the only time  
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear :  
Ah ! little praise ; thy voice  
Makes other hearts rejoice,  
Makes all ears glad that hear ;  
And short my joy : but yet,  
O song, do not forget !

### *Book III*

For what wert thou to me?  
How shall I say? The moon,  
That poured her midnight noon  
Upon his wrecking sea;—  
A sail, that for a day  
Has cheered the castaway.

#### 13

Joy, sweetest lifeborn joy, where dost thou dwell?  
Upon the formless moments of our being  
Flitting, to mock the ear that heareth well,  
To escape the trained eye that strains in seeing,  
Dost thou fly with us whither we are fleeing;  
Or home in our creations, to withstand  
Black-wingèd death, that slays the making hand?

The making mind, that must untimely perish  
Amidst its work which time may not destroy,  
The beauteous forms which man shall love to cherish,  
The glorious songs that combat earth's annoy?  
Thou dost dwell here, I know, divinest Joy:  
But they who build thy towers fair and strong,  
Of all that toil, feel most of care and wrong.

Sense is so tender, O and hope so high,  
That common pleasures mock their hope and sense;  
And swifter than doth lightning from the sky  
The ecstasy they pine for flashes hence,  
Leaving the darkness and the woe immense,  
Wherewith it seems no thread of life was woven,  
Nor doth the track remain where once 'twas cloven.

And heaven and all the stable elements  
That guard God's purpose mock us, though the mind  
Be spent in searching: for his old intents  
We see were never for our joy designed:  
They shine as doth the bright sun on the blind,



## *Shorter Poems*

Or like his pensioned stars, that hymn above  
His praise, but not toward us, that God is Love.

For who so well hath wooed the maiden hours  
As quite to have won the worth of their rich show,  
To rob the night of mystery, or the flowers  
Of their sweet delicacy ere they go?  
Nay, even the dear occasion when we know,  
We miss the joy, and on the gliding day  
The special glories float and pass away.

Only life's common plod : still to repair  
The body and the thing which perisheth :  
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,  
The grinding enginry of blood and breath,  
Pain's random darts, the heartless spade of death ;  
All is but grief, and heavily we call  
On the last terror for the end of all.

Then comes the happy moment : not a stir  
In any tree, no portent in the sky :  
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,  
The morrow hath no name to call it by,  
But life and joy are one,—we know not why,—  
As though our very blood long breathless lain  
Had tasted of the breath of God again.

And having tasted it I speak of it,  
And praise him thinking how I trembled then  
When his touch strengthened me, as now I sit  
In wonder, reaching out beyond my ken,  
Reaching to turn the day back, and my pen  
Urging to tell a tale which told would seem  
The witless phantasy of them that dream.

### *Book III*

But O most blessèd truth, for truth thou art,  
Abide thou with me till my life shall end.  
Divinity hath surely touched my heart ;  
I have possessed more joy than earth can lend :  
I may attain what time shall never spend.  
Only let not my duller days destroy  
The memory of thy witness and my joy.

#### 14

THE full moon from her cloudless skies  
Turneth her face, I think, on me ;  
And from the hour when she doth rise  
Till when she sets, none else will see.

One only other ray she hath,  
That makes an angle close with mine,  
And glancing down its happy path  
Upon another spot doth shine.

But that ray too is sent to me,  
For where it lights there dwells my heart :  
And if I were where I would be,  
Both rays would shine, love, where thou art.

#### 15

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake !  
The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,  
It leaps in the sky : unrisen lustres slake  
The o'ertaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake !

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee ;  
Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,  
Already they watch the path thy feet shall take :  
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—  
She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee ;  
For thee would unashamed herself forsake :  
Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake !

## Shorter Poems

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,  
Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree :  
And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake ;  
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee :  
She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.  
Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,  
And awake my heart to be loved : awake, awake !'

### 16

#### SONG

I LOVE my lady's eyes  
Above the beauties rare  
She most is wont to prize,  
Above her sunny hair,  
And all that face to face  
Her glass repeats of grace.

For those are still the same  
To her and all that see :  
But oh ! her eyes will flame  
When they do look on me :  
And so above the rest  
I love her eyes the best.

Now say, [*Say, O say ! saith the music*]  
    who likes my song ?—  
I knew you by your eyes,  
That rest on nothing long,  
And have forgot surprise ;  
And stray [*Stray, O stray ! saith the music*]  
    as mine will stray,  
The while my love's away.

## *Book III*

### 17

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,  
Hast loved me best and longest,  
And now with trust the strongest  
The joy of my heart renewest ;

Since thou art dearer and dearer  
While other hearts grow colder  
And ever, as love is older,  
More lovingly drawest nearer :

Since now I see in the measure  
Of all my giving and taking,  
Thou wert my hand in the making,  
The sense and soul of my pleasure ;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee  
In heaven I pray be recorded,  
And all thy love rewarded  
By God, thy master that made thee.

### 18

THE evening darkens over  
After a day so bright  
The windcapt waves discover  
That wild will be the night.  
There's sound of distant thunder.

The latest sea-birds hover  
Along the cliff's sheer height ;  
As in the memory wander  
Last flutterings of delight,  
White wings lost on the white.

## *Shorter Poems*

There's not a ship in sight ;  
And as the sun goes under  
Thick clouds conspire to cover  
The moon that should rise yonder.  
Thou art alone, fond lover.

### 19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,  
Who dost to Truth aspire,  
Whether thou live or die,  
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly  
Through tempest, flood and fire,  
Nor dost not shrink to try  
Thy heart in torments dire :

If thou canst Death defy,  
If thy Faith is entire,  
Press onward, for thine eye  
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,  
And with their deathless quire  
Soon shall thine eager cry  
Be numbered and expire.

## BOOK IV

TO

L. B. C. L. M.

I

I LOVE all beauteous things,  
I seek and adore them ;  
God hath no better praise,  
And man in his hasty days  
Is honoured for them.

I too will something make  
And joy in the making ;  
Altho' to-morrow it seem  
Like the empty words of a dream  
Remembered on waking.

2

My spirit sang all day  
O my joy.  
Nothing my tongue could say,  
Only My joy !

My heart an echo caught—  
O my joy—  
And spake, Tell me thy thought,  
Hide not thy joy.

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## *Shorter Poems*

My eyes gan peer around,—  
O my joy—  
What beauty hast thou found?  
Shew us thy joy.

My jealous ears grew whist ;—  
O my joy—  
Music from heaven is 't,  
Sent for our joy?

She also came and heard ;  
O my joy,  
What, said she, is this word?  
What is thy joy?

And I replied, O see,  
O my joy,  
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee :  
Thou art my joy.

### 3

THE upper skies are palest blue  
Mottled with pearl and fretted snow :  
With tattered fleece of inky hue  
Close overhead the storm-clouds go.

Their shadows fly along the hill  
And o'er the crest mount one by one :  
The whitened planking of the mill  
Is now in shade and now in sun.

## *Book IV*

### 4

THE clouds have left the sky,  
The wind hath left the sea,  
The half-moon up on high  
Shrinketh her face of dree

She lightens on the comb  
Of leaden waves, that roar  
And thrust their hurried foam  
Up on the dusky shore.

Behind the western bars  
The shrouded day retreats,  
And unperceived the stars  
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,  
The small moon lightens more ;  
And as I turn me home,  
My shadow walks before.

### 5

LAST WEEK OF FEBRUARY, 1890

HARK to the merry birds, hark how they sing!  
Although 'tis not yet spring  
And keen the air ;  
Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,  
Doth to his heiress shew  
His kingdom fair.

In patient russet is his forest spread,  
All bright with bramble red,  
With beechen moss  
And holly sheen : the oak silver and stark  
Sunneth his aged bark  
And wrinkled boss.



## *Shorter Poems*

But neath the ruin of the withered brake  
Primroses now awake  
From nursing shades :  
The crumpled carpet of the dry leaves brown  
Avails not to keep down  
The hyacinth blades.

The hazel hath put forth his tassels ruffed ;  
The willow's flossy tuft  
Hath slipped him free :  
The rose amid her ransacked orange hips  
Braggeth the tender tips  
Of bowers to be.

A black rook stirs the branches here and there,  
Foraging to repair  
His broken home :  
And hark, on the ash-boughs ! Never thrush did sing  
Louder in praise of spring,  
When spring is come.

## 6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh ;  
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May :  
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth :  
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower  
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's drouth :  
On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower  
In bulging heads that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

## *Book IV*

### 7

GÁY Róbin is seen no more :

He is gone with the snow,

For winter is o'er

And Robin will go.

In need he was fed, and now he is fled

Away to his secret nest.

No more will he stand

Begging for crumbs,

No longer he comes

Beseeching our hand

And showing his breast

At window and door :—

Gay Robin is seen no more.

Blithe Robin is heard no more :

He gave us his song

When summer was o'er

And winter was long :

He sang for his bread and now he is fled

Away to his secret nest.

And there in the green

Early and late

Alone to his mate

He pipeth unseen

And swelleth his breast ;

For us it is o'er :—

Blithe Robin is heard no more.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 8

SPRING goeth all in white,  
Crowned with milk-white may :  
In fleecy flocks of light  
O'er heaven the white clouds stray :

White butterflies in the air ;  
White daisies prank the ground :  
The cherry and hoary pear  
Scatter their snow around.

### 9

My eyes for beauty pine,  
My soul for Goddës grace :  
No other care nor hope is mine ;  
To heaven I turn my face.

One splendour thence is shed  
From all the stars above :  
'Tis namèd when God's name is said,  
'Tis Love, 'tis heavenly Love.

And every gentle heart,  
That burns with true desire,  
Is lit from eyes that mirror part  
Of that celestial fire.

### 10

O LOVE, my muse, how was 't for me  
Among the best to dare,  
In thy high courts that bowed the knee  
With sacrifice and prayer ?

## *Book IV*

Their mighty offerings at thy shrine  
Shamed me, who nothing bore  
Their suits were mockeries of mine,  
I sued for so much more.

Full many I met that crowned with bay  
In triumph home returned,  
And many a master on the way  
Proud of the prize I scorned.

I wished no garland on my head  
Nor treasure in my hand ;  
My gift the longing that me led,  
My prayer thy high command,

My love, my muse ; and when I spake  
Thou mad'st me thine that day,  
And more than hundred hearts could take  
Gav'st me to bear away.

### I I

Love on my heart from heaven fell,  
Soft as the dew on flowers of spring,  
Sweet as the hidden drops that swell  
Their honey-throated chaliceing.

Now never from him do I part,  
Hosanna evermore I cry :  
I taste his savour in my heart,  
And bid all praise him as do I.

Without him noughtsoever is,  
Nor was afore, nor e'er shall be :  
Nor any other joy than his  
Wish I for mine to comfort me.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 12

THE hill pines were sighing,  
O'ercast and chill was the day :  
A mist in the valley lying  
Blotted the pleasant May.

But deep in the glen's bosom  
Summer slept in the fire  
Of the odorous gorse-blossom  
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,  
And out of the copse the stroke  
Of the iron axe that hammered  
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,  
As a hundred years of pride  
Crashed, in the silence falling :  
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

### 13

#### THE WINDMILL

THE green corn waving in the dale,  
The ripe grass waving on the hill :  
I lean across the paddock pale  
And gaze upon the giddy mill.

Its hurtling sails a mighty sweep  
Cut thro' the air : with rushing sound  
Each strikes in fury down the steep,  
Rattles, and whirls in chase around.

## *Book IV*

Beside his sacks the miller stands  
On high within the open door :  
A book and pencil in his hands,  
His grist and meal he reckoneth o'er.

His tireless merry slave the wind  
Is busy with his work to-day :  
From whencesoe'er, he comes to grind;  
He hath a will and knows the way.

He gives the creaking sails a spin,  
The circling millstones faster flee,  
The shuddering timbers groan within,  
And down the shoot the meal runs free

The miller giveth him no thanks,  
And doth not much his work o'erlook :  
He stands beside the sacks, and ranks  
The figures in his dusty book.

### 14

WHEN June is come, then all the day  
I'll sit with my love in the scented hay:  
And watch the sunshot palaces high,  
That the white clouds build in the breezy sky.

She singeth, and I do make her a song,  
And read sweet poems the whole day long:  
Unseen as we lie in our haybuilt home.  
O life is delight when June is come.

### 15

THE pinks along my garden walks  
Have all shot forth their summer stalks,  
Thronging their buds 'mong tulips hot,  
And blue forget-me-not.

## *Shorter Poems*

Their dazzling snows forth-bursting soon  
Will lade the idle breath of June :  
And waken thro' the fragrant night  
    To steal the pale moonlight.

The nightingale at end of May  
Lingers each year for their display ,  
Till when he sees their blossoms blown,  
    He knows the spring is flown.

June's birth they greet, and when their bloom  
Dislustres, withering on his tomb,  
Then summer hath a shortening day;  
    And steps slow to decay.

### 16

FIRE of heaven, whose starry arrow  
Pierces the veil of timeless night :  
Molten spheres, whose tempests narrow  
Their floods to a beam of gentle light,  
To charm with a moon-ray quenched from fire  
The land of delight, the land of desire !

Smile of love, a flower planted,  
Sprung in the garden of joy that art :  
Eyes that shine with a glow enchanted,  
Whose spreading fires encircle my heart,  
And warm with a noon-ray drenched in fire  
My land of delight, my land of desire !

### 17

THE idle life I lead  
Is like a pleasant sleep,  
Wherein I rest and heed  
The dreams that by me sweep

## *Book IV*

And still of all my dreams  
In turn so swiftly past,  
Each in its fancy seems  
A nobler than the last.

And every eve I say,  
Noting my step in bliss,  
That I have known no day  
In all my life like this.

### 18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,  
White-robed, with silver hair ;  
In your meadows fair,  
Where the willows weep,  
And the sad moonbeam  
On the gliding stream  
Writes her scattered dream :

Angel spirits of sleep,  
Dancing to the weir  
In the hollow roar  
Of its waters deep ;  
Know ye how men say  
That ye haunt no more  
Isle and grassy shore  
With your moonlit play ;  
That ye dance not here,  
White-robed spirits of sleep,  
All the summer night  
Threading dances light ?



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All the summer night  
Threading dances light ?

## *Shorter Poems*

19

### ANNIVERSARY

WHAT is sweeter than new-mown hay,  
Fresher than winds o'er-sea that blow,  
Innocent above children's play,  
Fairer and purer than winter snow,  
Frolic as are the morns of May?  
—If it should be what best I know!

What is richer than thoughts that stray  
From reading of poems that smoothly flow?  
What is solemn like the delay  
Of concords linked in a music slow  
Dying thro' vaulted aisles away?  
—If it should be what best I know!

What gives faith to me when I pray,  
Setteth my heart with joy aglow,  
Filleth my song with fancies gay,  
Maketh the heaven to which I go,  
The gladness of earth that lasteth for aye?  
—If it should be what best I know!

But tell me thou—'twas on this day  
That first we loved five years ago—  
If 'tis a thing that I can say,  
Though it must be what best we know.

20

THE summer trees are tempest-torn,  
The hills are wrapped in a mantle wide  
Of folding rain by the mad wind borne  
Across the country side.

## *Book IV*

His scourge of fury is lashing down  
The delicate-rankèd golden corn,  
That never more shall rear its crown  
And curtsey to the morn.

There shews no care in heaven to save  
Man's pitiful patience, or provide  
A season for the season's slave,  
Whose trust hath toiled and died.

So my proud spirit in me is sad,  
A wreck of fairer fields to mourn,  
The ruin of golden hopes she had,  
My delicate-rankèd corn.

### 2 I

THE birds that sing on autumn eves  
Among the golden-tinted leaves,  
Are but the few that true remain  
Of budding May's rejoicing train.  
Like autumn flowers that brave the frost,  
And make their show when hope is lost,  
These 'mong the fruits and mellow scent  
Mourn not the high-sunned summer spent.  
Their notes thro' all the jocund spring  
Were mixed in merry musicking :  
They sang for love the whole day long,  
But now their love is all for song.  
Now each hath perfected his lay  
To praise the year that hastes away :  
They sit on boughs apart, and vie  
In single songs and rich reply :  
And oft as in the copse I hear  
These anthems of the dying year,  
The passions, once her peace that stole,  
With flattering love my heart console.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 22

WHEN my love was away,  
Full three days were not sped,  
I caught my fancy astray  
Thinking if she were dead,

And I alone, alone :  
It seemed in my misery  
In all the world was none  
Ever so lone as I.

I wept ; but it did not shame  
Nor comfort my heart : away  
I rode as I might, and came  
To my love at close of day.

The sight of her stilled my fears,  
My fairest-hearted love :  
And yet in her eyes were tears :  
Which when I questioned of,

O now thou art come, she cried,  
'Tis fled : but I thought to-day  
I never could here abide,  
If thou wert longer away.

### 23

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest :  
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,  
Is fallen back in the west  
To couch with the sinking sun.  
The last clouds fare  
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly  
In melting drifts of the sky.  
Already the birds in the air

## *Book IV*

Appear again ; the rooks return to their haunt,  
And one by one,  
Proclaiming aloud their care,  
Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,  
They trim afresh the fair  
Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm,  
And awhile will be handsome yet.  
To-morrow's sun shall caress  
Their remnant of loveliness :  
In quiet days for a time  
Sad Autumn lingering warm  
Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah ! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground !  
What havoc ! The laughing timbrels of June,  
That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,  
That sheltered the cooing doves at noon,  
Of airy fans the delicate throng,—  
Torn and scattered around :  
Far out afield they lie,  
In the watery furrows die,  
In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown,  
Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,  
The high year's flaunting crown  
Shattered and trampled down.

The day is done : the tired land looks for night :  
She prays to the night to keep  
In peace her nerves of delight :  
While silver mist upstealeth silently,  
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky  
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,  
And in her tranquil light  
Sleep falls on forest and field.  
Sée ! sléep hath fallen : the trees are asleep :  
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 24

YE thrilled me once, ye mournful strains,  
Ye anthems of plaintive woe,  
My spirit was sad when I was young ;  
Ah sorrowful long-ago !  
But since I have found the beauty of joy  
I have done with proud dismay :  
For howsoe'er man hug his care  
The best of his art is gay.

And yet if voices of fancy's choir  
Again in mine ear awake  
Your old lament, 'tis dear to me still,  
Nor all for memory's sake :  
'Tis like the dirge of sorrow dead,  
Whose tears are wiped away ;  
Or drops of the shower when rain is o'er,  
That jewel the brightened day.

### 25

SAY who is this with silvered hair,  
So pale and worn and thin,  
Who passeth here, and passeth there,  
And looketh out and in ?

That useth not our garb nor tongue  
And knoweth things untold :  
Who teacheth pleasure to the young,  
And wisdom to the old ?

No toil he maketh his by day,  
No home his own by night ;  
But wheresoe'er he take his way,  
He killeth our delight.

## *Book IV*

Since he is come there's nothing wise  
Nor fair in man or child,  
Unless his deep divining eyes  
Have looked on it and smiled.

Whence came he hither all alone  
Among our folk to spy?  
There's nought that we can call our own,  
Till he shall hap to die.

And I would dig his grave full deep  
Beneath the churchyard yew,  
Lest thence his wizard eyes might peep  
To mark the things we do.

### 26

CROWN Winter with green,  
And give him good drink  
To physic his spleen  
Or ever he think.

His mouth to the bowl,  
His feet to the fire;  
And let him, good soul,  
No comfort desire.

So merry he be,  
I bid him abide:  
And merry be we  
This good Yuletide.



## *Shorter Poems*

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,  
And whitens all the marshy lea :  
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,  
The day is dark and black the sea.

Shorn of their crests the blighted waves  
With driven foam the offing fleck :  
The ebb is low and barely laves  
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach  
My childhood chanced and chose to be :  
'Twas here I played, and musing made  
My friend the melancholy sea.

He from his dim enchanted caves  
With shuddering roar and onrush wild  
Fell down in sacrificial waves  
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear  
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee :—  
My heart is now too fixed to bow  
Tho' all his tempests howl at me :

For to the gain life's summer saves,  
My solemn joy's increasing store,  
The tossing of his mournful waves  
Makes sweetest music evermore.

28

MY spirit kisseth thine,  
My spirit embraceth thee :  
I feel thy being twine  
Her graces over me,

## *Book IV*

In the life-kindling fold  
Of God's breath ; where on high,  
In furthest space untold  
Like a lost world I lie :

And o'er my dreaming plains  
Lightens, most pale and fair,  
A moon that never wanes ;  
Or more, if I compare,

Like what the shepherd sees  
On late mid-winter dawns,  
When thro' the branchèd trees,  
O'er the white-frosted lawns,

The huge unclouded sun,  
Surprising the world whist,  
Is all uprisen thereon,  
Golden with melting mist.

### 29

ARIEL, O,—my angel, my own,—  
Whither away then art thou flown  
Beyond my spirit's dominion ?  
That makest my heart run over with rhyme,  
Renewing at will my youth for a time,  
My servant, my pretty minion.

Now indeed I have cause to mourn,  
Now thou returnest scorn for scorn :  
Leave me not to my folly :  
For when thou art with me is none so gay  
As I, and none when thou'rt away  
Was ever so melancholy.

## *Shorter Poems*

30

### LAUS DEO

LET praise devote thy work, and skill employ  
Thy whole mind, and thy heart be lost in joy.  
Well-doing bringeth pride, this constant thought  
Humility, that thy best done is nought.  
Man doeth nothing well, be it great or small,  
Save to praise God ; but that hath savèd all :  
For God requires no more than thou hast done,  
And takes thy work to bless it for his own.

## BOOK V

DEDICATED TO M. G. K.

### I

#### THE WINNOWERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs  
The little hamlet lies,  
And nothing sees but the bald crowns  
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent  
And grey slopes of the wold,  
The red roofs nestle, oversprent  
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun  
Basking, what time of year  
The thrush his singing has begun,  
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched  
His faggots on the stack :  
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched  
Sweet hay from crib and rack :

And from the barn hard by was borne  
A steady muffled din,  
By which we knew that threshèd corn  
Was winnowing, and went in.

## *Shorter Poems*

The sunbeams on the motey air  
Streamed through the open door,  
And on the brown arms moving bare,  
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed  
The hopper, lest it lack,  
One in the bushel scoops the seed,  
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,  
And the awns fly in the draught;  
To see us both so pensive grown  
The honest labourers laughed :

Merry they were, because the wheat  
Was clean and plump and good,  
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet  
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,  
And had not gat us free  
In spirit from the store and stir  
Of its immensity :

But here we found ourselves again.  
Where humble harvests bring  
After much toil but little grain,  
'Tis merry winnowing.

### 2

## THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

Love not too much. But how,  
When thou hast made me such,  
And dost thy gifts bestow,  
How can I love too much ?

## *Book V*

Though I must fear to lose,  
And drown my joy in care,  
With all its thorns I choose  
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,  
Didst kill my childish trust,  
That breach with toil did I  
Repair, because I must :  
And spite of frightening schemes,  
With which the fiends of Hell  
Blaspheme thee in my dreams,  
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,  
What marvel in me wrought  
Shall quite exculpate thee,  
I have no shadow of thought.  
What am I that complain ?  
The love, from which began  
My question sad and vain,  
Justifies thee to man.

### 3

SINCE to be loved endures,  
To love is wise :  
Earth hath no good but yours,  
Brave, joyful eyes :

Earth hath no sin but thine,  
Dull eye of scorn :  
O'er thee the sun doth pine  
And angels mourn.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 4

#### THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams  
Of the September sun : his golden gleams  
On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows  
Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows  
That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers ;  
Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads  
Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds ;  
And in the feathery aster bees on wing  
Seize and set free the honied flowers,  
Till thousand stars leap with their visiting :  
While ever across the path mazily flit,  
Unpiloted in the sun,  
The dreamy butterflies  
With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,  
White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes,  
Or on chance flowers sit,  
With idle effort plundering one by one  
The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze  
Into the garden saileth,  
Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,  
For his sharpness he vaileth :  
So long a comrade of the bearded corn,  
Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,  
O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray,  
As mindful of the kisses and soft play  
Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,  
Ere he deserted her ;  
Lover of fragrance, and too late repents ;  
Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink,  
Nor spicy pink,

## *Book V*

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,  
But the few lingering scents  
Of streakèd pea, and gillyflower, and stocks  
Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox.

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones  
Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,  
With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,  
Or the wild cry  
Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare  
The distant blue, to watering as they fare  
With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,  
If aught their ancient polity displease,—  
Come gathering to their colony, and there  
Settling in ragged parliament,  
Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

### 5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,  
When first we kissed beside the thorn,  
So strangely sweet, it was not strange  
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told—  
That love will change in growing old;  
Though day by day is nought to see,  
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass  
Quite to forget what once he was,  
Nor even in fancy to recall  
The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,  
So deep in summer floods is drowned,  
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,  
How love so young could be so sweet.



## *Shorter Poems*

### 6

#### LARKS

WHAT voice of gladness, hark !  
In heaven is ringing ?  
From the sad fields the lark  
Is upward winging.

High through the mournful mist that blots our day  
Their songs betray them soaring in the grey.

See them ! Nay, they  
In sunlight swim ; above the furthest stain  
Of cloud attain ; their hearts in music rain  
Upon the plain.

Sweet birds, far out of sight  
Your songs of pleasure  
Dome us with joy as bright  
As heaven's best azure.

### 7

#### THE PALM WILLOW

SEE, whirling snow sprinkles the starvèd fields,  
The birds have stayed to sing ;  
No covert yet their fairy harbour yields.  
When cometh Spring ?  
Ah ! in their tiny throats what songs unborn  
Are quenched each morn.

The lenten lilies, through the frost that push,  
Their yellow heads withhold :  
The woodland willow stands a lonely bush  
Of nebulous gold ;  
There the Spring-goddess cowers in faint attire  
Of frightened fire.

## *Book V*

### 8

#### ASIAN BIRDS

IN this May-month, by grace  
of heaven, things shoot apace.  
The waiting multitude  
of fair boughs in the wood,  
How few days have arrayed  
their beauty in green shade.

What have I seen or heard?  
it was the yellow bird  
Sang in the tree : he flew  
a flame against the blue ;  
Upward he flashed. Again,  
hark ! 'tis his heavenly strain.

Another ! Hush ! Behold,  
many, like boats of gold,  
From waving branch to branch  
their airy bodies launch.  
What music is like this,  
where each note is a kiss ?

The golden willows lift  
their boughs the sun to sift :  
Their sprays they droop to screen  
the sky with veils of green,  
A floating cage of song,  
where feathered lovers throng.

How the delicious notes  
come bubbling from their throats !  
Full and sweet how they are shed  
like round pearls from a thread !  
The motions of their flight  
are wishes of delight.

## *Shorter Poems*

Hearing their song I trace  
the secret of their grace.  
Ah, could I this fair time  
so fashion into rhyme,  
The poem that I sing  
would be the voice of spring.

### 9

#### JANUARY

COLD is the winter day, misty and dark :  
The sunless sky with faded gleams is rent :  
And patches of thin snow outlying, mark  
The landscape with a drear disfigurement.

The trees their mournful branches lift aloft :  
The oak with knotty twigs is full of trust,  
With bud-thronged bough the cherry in the croft ;  
The chestnut holds her gluey knops upthrust.

No birds sing, but the starling chaps his bill  
And chatters mockingly ; the newborn lambs  
Within their strawbuilt fold beneath the hill  
Answer with plaintive cry their bleating dams.

Their voices melt in welcome dreams of spring,  
Green grass and leafy trees and sunny skies :  
My fancy decks the woods, the thrushes sing,  
Meadows are gay, bees hum and scents arise.

And God the Maker doth my heart grow bold  
To praise for wintry works not understood,  
Who all the worlds and ages doth behold,  
Evil and good as one, and all as good.

## Book V

IO

### A ROBIN

FLAME-THROATED robin on the topmost bough  
Of the leafless oak, what singest thou?  
Hark ! he telleth how—  
‘Spring is coming now ; Spring is coming now.  
Now ruddy are the elm-tops against the blue sky,  
The pale larch donneth her jewelry ;  
Red fir and black fir sigh,  
And I am lamenting the year gone by.  
The bushes where I nested are all cut down,  
They are felling the tall trees one by one,  
And my mate is dead and gone,  
In the winter she died and left me lone.  
She lay in the thicket where I fear to go ;  
For when the March-winds after the snow  
The leaves away did blow,  
She was not there, and my heart is woe :  
And sad is my song, when I begin to sing,  
As I sit in the sunshine this merry spring :  
Like a withered leaf I cling  
To the white oak-bough, while the wood doth ring.  
Spring is coming now, the sun again is gay ;  
Each day like a last spring’s happy day.’—  
Thus sang he ; then from his spray  
He saw me listening and flew away.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again  
Since Maurice died :  
With corniced drift it blocked the lane  
And sheeted in a desolate plain  
The country side.

## *Shorter Poems*

The trees with silvery rime bedight  
    Their branches bare.  
By day no sun appeared ; by night  
The hidden moon shed thievish light  
    In the misty air.

We fed the birds that flew around  
    In flocks to be fed :  
No shelter in holly or brake they found.  
The speckled thrush on the frozen ground  
    Lay frozen and dead.

We skated on stream and pond ; we cut  
    The crinching snow  
To Doric temple or Arctic hut ;  
We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut  
    By the fireside glow.

Yet grudged we our keen delights before  
    Maurice should come.  
We said, In-door or out-of-door  
We shall love life for a month or more,  
    When he is home.

They brought him home ; 'twas two days late  
    For Christmas day :  
Wrapped in white, in solemn state,  
A flower in his hand, all still and straight  
    Our Maurice lay.

And two days ere the year outgave  
    We laid him low.  
The best of us truly were not brave,  
When we laid Maurice down in his grave  
    Under the snow.

## Book V

12

### NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,  
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom  
    Ye learn your song :  
Where are those starry woods ? O might I wander there,  
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air  
    Bloom the year long !

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams :  
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,  
    A throe of the heart,  
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,  
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,  
    For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men  
We pour our dark nocturnal secret ; and then,  
    As night is withdrawn  
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of  
    May,  
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day  
    Welcome the dawn.

13

A SONG of my heart, as the sun peered o'er the sea,  
    Was born at morning to me :  
And out of my treasure-house it chose  
    A melody, that arose

Of all fair sounds that I love, remembered together  
    In one ; and I knew not whether  
From waves of rustling wheat it was,  
    Recoveringly that pass :

## *Shorter Poems*

Or a hum of bees in the queenly robes of the lime :

Or a descant in pairing time

Of warbling birds : or watery bells

Of rivulets in the hills :

Or whether on blazing downs a high lark's hymn

Alone in the azure dim :

Or a sigh of pines, when the midnight wold

Is solitary and cold :

Or a lapping river-ripple all day chiding

The bow of my wherry gliding

Down Thames, between his flowery shores

Re-echoing to the oars :

Or anthem notes, wherever in archèd quires

The unheeded music twines,

And, centuries by, to the stony shade

Flies following and to fade :

Or a homely prattle of children's voices gay

'Mong garden joys at play :

Or a sundown chaunting of solemn rooks :

Or memory of my books,

Which hold the words that poets in many a tongue

To the irksome world have sung :

Or the voice, my happy lover, of thee

Now separated from me.

A ruby of fire in the burning sleep of my brain

Long hid my thought had lain,

Forgotten dreams of a thousand days

Ingathering to its rays,

The light of life in darkness tempering long ;

Till now a perfect song,

A jewel of jewels it leapt above

To the coronal of my love.

## *Book V*

14

### FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,  
Mary, in whose fair name was laid  
Eton's corner, bless our youth  
With truth, and purity, mother of truth !

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June,  
By silver Thames's lulling tune,  
In shade of willow or oak, who try  
The golden gates of poesy ;

Or on the tabled sward all day  
Match your strength in England's play,  
Scholars of Henry, giving grace  
To toil and force in game or race ;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame  
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came  
Here in his realm a realm to found,  
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing  
Ye plunge in the lashing weir ; or dashing  
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain  
Round the rushes and home again ;—

Or what pursuit soe'er it be  
That makes your mingled presence free,  
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes  
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes ;



## *Shorter Poems*

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death,  
Temper for you her sword of faith ;  
Crown with honour the loving eyes,  
And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring : for you  
The very stars of heaven are new ;  
And aged Fame again is born,  
Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,  
Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,  
Homer his bardic hymn rehearse,  
Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best ;  
Each in one thing excel the rest :  
Strive ; and hold fast this truth of heaven—  
To him that hath shall more be given.

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,  
So many hours for food and sleep,  
So many hours till study tire,  
So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save,  
Mirrors bright for her magic cave ;  
Wherein may steadfast eyes behold  
A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,  
And when ye leave regret it not ;  
With wishing gifts in festal state  
Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

## *Book V*

Then to the world let shine your light,  
Children in play be lions in fight,  
And match with red immortal deeds  
The victory that made ring the meads :

Or by firm wisdom save your land  
From giddy head and grasping hand :  
IMPROVE THE BEST ; so shall your sons  
Better what ye have bettered once.

Send them here to the court of grace  
Bearing your name to fill your place :  
Ye in their time shall live again  
The happy dream of Henry's reign :

And on his day your steps be bent  
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,  
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth  
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

### 15

THE north wind came up yesternight  
With the new year's full moon,  
And rising as she gained her height,  
Grew to a tempest soon.  
Yet found he not on heaven's face  
A task of cloud to clear ;  
There was no speck that he might chase  
Off the blue hemisphere,  
Nor vapour from the land to drive :  
The frost-bound country held  
Nought motionable or alive,  
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.  
There scarce was hanging in the wood  
A shrivelled leaf to reave ;

## *Shorter Poems*

No bud had burst its swathing hood  
That he could rend or grieve :  
Only the tall tree-skeletons,  
Where they were shadowed all,  
Wavered a little on the stones,  
And on the white church-wall.

—Like as an artist in his mood,  
Who reckons all as nought,  
So he may quickly paint his nude,  
Unutterable thought :  
So Nature in a frenzied hour  
By day or night will show  
Dim indications of the power  
That doometh man to woe.  
Ah, many have my visions been,  
And some I know full well :  
I would that all that I have seen  
Were fit for speech to tell.—

And by the churchyard as I came,  
It seemed my spirit passed  
Into a land that hath no name,  
Grey, melancholy and vast ;  
Where nothing comes : but Memory,  
The widowed queen of Death,  
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye  
All slumber banisheth.  
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes  
That sickly, staring shore,  
Its old chaotic change of shapes  
Remembers evermore.  
And ghosts of cities long decayed  
And ruined shrines of Fate  
Gather the paths, that Time hath made  
Foolish and desolate.

## *Book V*

Nor winter there hath hope of spring,  
Nor the pale night of day,  
Since the old king with scorpion sting  
Hath done himself away.

\* \* \*

The morn was calm ; the wind's last breath  
Had fal'n : in solemn hush  
The golden moon went down beneath  
The dawning's crimson flush.

### 16

#### NORTH WIND IN OCTOBER

IN the golden glade the chestnuts are fallen all :  
From the sered boughs of the oak the acorns fall :  
The beech scatters her ruddy fire ;  
The lime hath stripped to the cold,  
And standeth naked above her yellow attire :  
The larch thinneth her spire  
To lay the ways of the wood with cloth of gold.

Out of the golden-green and white  
Of the brake the fir-trees stand upright  
In the forest of flame, and wave aloft  
To the blue of heaven their blue-green tuftings soft.

But swiftly in shuddering gloom the splendours fail,  
As the harrying North-wind beareth  
A cloud of skirmishing hail  
The grievèd woodland to smite :  
In a hurricane through the trees he teareth,  
Raking the boughs and the leaves rending,  
And whistleth to the descending  
Blows of his icy flail.  
Gold and snow he mixeth in spite,  
And whirlleth afar ; as away on his winnowing flight  
He passeth, and all again for awhile is bright.

## *Shorter Poems*

17

### FIRST SPRING MORNING

A CHILD'S POEM.

Look ! Look ! the spring is come :  
O feel the gentle air,  
That wanders thro' the boughs to burst  
The thick buds everywhere !  
The birds are glad to see  
The high unclouded sun :  
Winter is fled away, they sing,  
'The gay time is begun.

Adown the meadows green  
Let us go dance and play,  
And look for violets in the lane,  
And ramble far away  
To gather primroses,  
That in the woodland grow,  
And hunt for oxlips, or if yet  
The blades of bluebells show :

There the old woodman gruff  
Hath half the coppice cut,  
And weaves the hurdles all day long  
Beside his willow hut.  
We'll steal on him, and then  
Startle him, all with glee  
Singing our song of winter fled  
And summer soon to be.

## *Book V*

18

### A VILLAGER

THERE was no lad handsomer than Willie was  
The day that he came to father's house :  
There was none had an eye as soft an' blue  
As Willie's was, when he came to woo.

To a labouring life though bound thee be,  
An' I on my father's ground live free,  
I'll take thee, I said, for thy manly grace,  
Thy gentle voice an' thy loving face.

'Tis forty years now since we were wed :  
We are ailing an' grey needs not to be said :  
But Willie's eye is as blue an' soft  
As the day when he wooed me in father's croft.

Yet changed am I in body an' mind,  
For Willie to me has ne'er been kind :  
Merrily drinking an' singing with the men  
He 'ud come home late six nights o' the se'n.

An' since the children be grown an' gone  
He 'as shunned the house an' left me lone :  
An' less an' less he brings me in  
Of the little he now has strength to win.

The roof lets through the wind an' the wet,  
An' master won't mend it with us in 's debt :  
An' all looks every day more worn,  
An' the best of my gowns be shabby an' torn.

No wonder if words hav' a-grown to blows ;  
That matters not while nobody knows :  
For love him I shall to the end of life,  
An' be, as I swore, his own true wife.

## *Shorter Poems*

An' when I am gone, he'll turn, an' see  
His folly an' wrong, an' be sorry for me :  
An' come to me there in the land o' bliss  
To give me the love I looked for in this.

### 19

WEEP not to-day : why should this sadness be ?  
Learn in present fears  
To o'ermaster those tears  
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise :  
Up, sad heart, nor faint  
In ungracious complaint,  
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace  
Draweth surely nigh,  
When good-night is good-bye ;  
For the sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting : nor far away  
Deem, nor strange thy doom.  
Like this sorrow 'twill come,  
And the day will be to-day.

# NEW POEMS





*PREVIOUS EDITION*

*Collected for the first time in 1899. Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. I*  
*See notes at end of that volume.*

# NEW POEMS

## ECLOGUE I

### THE MONTHS

#### *BASIL AND EDWARD*

MAN hath with man on earth no holier bond  
Than that the Muse weaves with her dreamy thread :  
Nor e'er was such transcendent love more fond  
Than that which Edward unto Basil led,  
Wandering alone across the woody shires  
To hear the living voice of that wide heart,  
To see the eyes that read the world's desires,  
And touch the hand that wrote the roving rhyme.  
Diverse their lots as distant were their homes,  
And since that early meeting, jealous Time  
Knitting their loves had held their lives apart.

But now again were these fine lovers met  
And sat together on a rocky hill  
Looking upon the vales of Somerset,  
Where the far sea gleam'd o'er the bosky combes,  
Satisfying their spirits the livelong day  
With various mirth and revelation due  
And delicate intimacy of delight,  
As there in happy indolence they lay  
And drank the sun, while round the breezy height  
Beneath their feet rabbit and listless ewe  
Nibbled the scented herb and grass at will.

## *New Poems*

Much talked they at their ease ; and at the last  
Spoke Edward thus, ' 'Twas on this very hill  
This time of the year,—but now twelve years are past,  
That you provoked in verse my younger skill  
To praise the months against your rival song ;  
And ere the sun had westered ten degrees  
Our rhyme had brought him thro' the Zodiac.  
Have you remembered ? '—Basil answer'd back,  
' Guest of my solace, how could I forget ?  
Years fly as months that seem'd in youth so long.  
The precious life that, like indifferent gold,  
Is disregarded in its worth to hold  
Some jewel of love that God therein would set,  
It passeth and is gone.'—' And yet not all,'  
Edward replied : ' The passion as I please  
Of that past day I can to-day recall ;  
And if but you, as I, remember yet  
Your part thereof, and will again rehearse,  
For half an hour we may old Time outwit.'  
And Basil said, ' Alas for my poor verse !  
What happy memory of it still endures  
Will thank your love : I have forgotten it.  
Speak you my stanzas, I will ransom yours.  
Begin you then as I that day began,  
And I will follow as your answers ran.'

### JANUARY

ED. The moon that mounts the sun's deserted way,  
Turns the long winter night to a silver day ;  
But setteth golden in face of the solemn sight  
Of her lord arising upon a world of white.

### FEBRUARY

BA. I have in my heart a vision of spring begun  
In a sheltering wood, that feels the kiss of the sun :  
And a thrush adareth the melting day that dies  
In clouds of purple afloat upon saffron skies.

## *New Poems*

### MARCH

ED. Now carol the birds at dawn, and some new lay  
Announceth a homecome voyager every day.  
Beneath the tufted sallows the streamlet thrills  
With the leaping trout and the gleam of the daffodils.

### APRIL

BA. Then laugheth the year ; with flowers the meads are  
bright ;  
The bursting branches are tipped with flames of light :  
The landscape is light ; the dark clouds flee above,  
And the shades of the land are a blue that is deep as love.

### MAY

ED. But if you have seen a village all red and old  
In cherry-orchards a-sprinkle with white and gold,  
By a hawthorn seated, or a witch-elm flowering high,  
A gay breeze making riot in the waving rye !

### JUNE

BA. Then night retires from heaven ; the high winds go  
A-sailing in cloud-pavilions of cavern'd snow.  
O June, sweet Philomel sang thy cradle-lay ;  
In rosy revel thy spirit shall pass away.

### JULY

ED. Heavy is the green of the fields, heavy the trees  
With foliage hang, drowsy the hum of bees  
In the thund'rous air : the crowded scents lie low :  
Thro' tangle of weeds the river runneth slow.

### AUGUST

BA. A reaper with dusty shoon and hat of straw  
On the yellow field, his scythe in his arm's braw :  
Beneath the tall grey trees resting at noon  
From sweat and swink with scythe and dusty shoon.

## New Poems

### SEPTEMBER

ED. Earth's flaunting flower of passion fadeth fair  
To ripening fruit in sunlit veils of the air,  
As the art of man makes wisdom to glorify  
The beauty and love of life born else to die.

### OCTOBER

BA. On frosty morns with the woods aflame, down, down  
The golden spoils fall thick from the chestnut crown.  
May Autumn in tranquil glory her riches spend,  
With mellow apples her orchard-branches bend.

### NOVEMBER

ED. Sad mists have hid the sun, the land is forlorn :  
The plough is afield, the hunter windeth his horn.  
Dame Prudence looketh well to her winter stores,  
And many a wise man finds his pleasure indoors.

### DECEMBER

BA. I pray thee don thy jerkin of olden time,  
Bring us good ice, and silver the trees with rime ;  
And I will good cheer, good music and wine bestow,  
When the Christmas guest comes galloping over the snow.

Thus they in verse alternate sang the year  
For rabbit shy and listless ewe to hear,  
Among the grey rocks on the mountain green  
Beneath the sky in fair and pastoral scene,  
Like those Sicilian swains, whose doric tongue  
After two thousand years is ever young,—  
*Sweet the pine's murmur, and, shepherd, sweet thy pipe,—*  
Or that which gentle Virgil, yet unripe,  
Of Tityrus sang under the spreading beech  
And gave to rustic clowns immortal speech,  
By rocky fountain or on flowery mead

## *New Poems*

Bidding their idle flocks at will to feed,  
While they, retreated to some bosky glade,  
Together told their loves, and as they played  
Sang what sweet thing so'er the poet feigned :

But these were men when good Victoria reigned,  
Poets themselves, who without shepherd gear  
Each of his native fancy sang the year.

### ECLOGUE II

GIOVANNI DUPRÈ

*LAWRENCE AND RICHARD*

LAWRENCE

Look down the river—against the western sky—  
The Ponte Santa Trinità—what throng  
Slowly trails o'er with waving banners high,  
With foot and horse ! Surely they bear along  
The spoil of one whom Florence honoureth :  
And hark ! the drum, the trumpeting dismay,  
The wail of the triumphal march of death.

RICHARD

'Twill be the funeral of Giovann Duprè  
Wending to Santa Croce. Let us go  
And see what relic of old splendour cheers  
The dying ritual.

LAWRENCE

They esteem him well  
To lay his bones with Michael Angelo.  
Who might he be ?

RICHARD

He too a sculptor, one  
Who left a work long to resist the years.

LAWRENCE

You make me question further.

## *New Poems*

RICHARD

I can tell

All as we walk. A poor woodcarver's son,  
Prenticed to cut his father's rude designs  
(We have it from himself), maker of shrines,  
In his mean workshop in Siena dreamed ;  
And saw as gods the artists of the earth,  
And long'd to stand on their immortal shore,  
And be as they, who in his vision gleam'd,  
Dowering the world with grace for evermore.  
So, taxing rest and leisure to one aim,  
The boy of single will and inbred skill  
Rose step by step to academic fame.

LAWRENCE

Do I not know him then? His figures fill  
The tympana o'er Santa Croce's gate ;  
In the museum too, his Cain, that stands  
A left-handed discobolos . . . . .

RICHARD

So great

His vogue, that elder art of classic worth  
Went to the wall to give his statues room ;  
And last—his country's praise could do no more—  
He cut the stone that honoured good Cavour.

LAWRENCE

I have seen the things.

RICHARD

He, finding in his hands

His life-desire possest, fell not in gloom,  
Nor froth'd in vanity : his Sabbath earn'd  
He look'd to spend in meditative rest :  
So laying chisel by, he took a pen  
To tell his story to his countrymen,  
And prove (he did it) that the flower of all,  
Rarest to attain, is in the power of all.

## *New Poems*

LAWRENCE

Yet nought he ever made, that I have learn'd,  
In wood or stone deserved, nay not his best,  
The Greek or Tuscan name for beautiful.  
'Twas level with its praise, had force to pull  
Favour from fashion.

RICHARD

Yet he made one thing  
Worthy of the lily city in her spring ;  
For while in vain the forms of beauty he aped,  
A perfect spirit in himself he shaped ;  
And all his lifetime doing less than well  
Where he profess'd nor doubted to excel,  
Now, where he had no scholarship, but drew  
His art from love, 'twas better than he knew :  
And when he sat to write, lo ! by him stood  
The heavenly Muse, who smiles on all things good ;  
And for his truth's sake, for his stainless mind,  
His homely love and faith, she now grew kind,  
And changed the crown, that from the folk he got,  
For her green laurel, and he knew it not.

LAWRENCE

Ah ! Love of Beauty ! This man then mistook  
Ambition for her ?

RICHARD

In simplicity  
Erring he kept his truth ; and in his book  
The statue of his grace is fair to see.

LAWRENCE

Then buried with their great he well may be.

RICHARD

And number'd with the saints, not among them  
Who painted saints. Join we his requiem.



# *New Poems*

## ECLOGUE III

### FOURTH OF JUNE AT ETON

#### *RICHARD AND GODFREY*

RICHARD

BENEATH the wattled bank the eddies swarm  
In wandering dimples o'er the shady pool :  
The same their chase as when I was at school ;  
The same the music, where in shallows warm  
The current, sunder'd by the bushy isles,  
Returns to join the main, and struggles free  
Above the willows, gurgling thro' the piles :  
Nothing is changed, and yet how changed are we !  
—What can bring Godfrey to the Muses' bower ?

GODFREY

What but brings you ? The festal day of the year ;  
To live in boyish memories for an hour ;  
See and be seen : tho' you come seldom here.

RICHARD

Dread of the pang it was, fear to behold  
What once was all myself, that kept me away.

GODFREY

You miss new pleasures coveting the old.

RICHARD

They need have prudence, who in courage lack ;  
'Twas that I might go on I looked not back.

GODFREY

Of all our company he, who, we say,  
Fruited the laughing flower of liberty !

## *New Poems*

RICHARD

Ah ! had I my desire, so should it be.

GODFREY

Nay, but I know this melancholy mood ;  
'Twas your poetic fancy when a boy.

RICHARD

For Fancy cannot live on real food :  
In youth she will despise familiar joy  
To dwell in mournful shades ; as they grow real,  
Then buildeth she of joy her far ideal.

GODFREY

And so perverteth all. This stream to me  
Sings, and in sunny ripples lingeringly  
The water saith ' Ah me ! where have I lept ?  
Into what garden of life ? what banks are these,  
What secret lawns, what ancient towers and trees ?  
Where the young sons of heav'n, with shouts of play  
Or low delighted speech, welcome the day,  
As if the poetry of the earth had slept  
To wake in ecstasy. O stay me ! alas !  
Stay me, ye happy isles, ere that I pass  
Without a memory on my sullen course  
By the black city to the tossing seas !'

RICHARD

So might this old oak say ' My heart is sere ;  
With greater effort every year I force  
My stubborn leafage : soon my branch will crack,  
And I shall fall or perish in the wrack :  
And here another tree its crown will rear,  
And see for centuries the boys at play :  
And 'neath its boughs, on some fine holiday,  
Old men shall prate as these.' Come see the game.

## *New Poems*

GODFREY

Yes, if you will. 'Tis all one picture fair.

RICHARD

Made in a mirror, and who looketh there  
Must see himself. Is not a dream the same?

GODFREY

*Life is a dream.*

RICHARD

And you, who say it, seem  
Dreaming to speak to a phantom in a dream.

### 4

## ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path !  
My homing heart no happier playground hath.  
I need not close my lids but it appears  
Through the bewilderment of forty years  
To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between  
Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green ;  
Fairer than dream of sleep, than Hope more fair  
Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,  
Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees,  
Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar  
From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,  
Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,  
A mossy terrace of the native chalk  
Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around  
Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.  
There live the memories of my early days,  
There still with childish heart my spirit plays ;

## *New Poems*

Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair  
When she hath fled me, I have found her' there ;  
And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring  
Alternate days of summer and of spring,  
With childish thought, and childish faces bright,  
And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood,  
A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood :  
Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,  
Whereby unto the southern front we went,  
And from the dark plantation climbing free,  
Over a valley look'd out on the sea.

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky  
Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie  
High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,  
Or nearer in the roads pass within hail,  
Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride  
At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch ; nay, now  
The brazen disk is cold against my brow,  
And in my sight a circle of the sea  
Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee,  
And ships in stately motion pass so near  
That what I see is speaking to my ear :  
I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,  
The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain  
That runs out thro' the hawse, the clank of the winch  
Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,  
Till half I wonder if they have no care,  
Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear  
On all their doings, if I vex them not  
On every petty task of their rough lot  
Prying and spying, searching every craft  
From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—

## *New Poems*

Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean  
Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen  
Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length,  
Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some  
Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come  
Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up  
Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop,  
By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,  
The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,  
Or some immense three-decker of the line,  
Romantic as the tale of Troy divine ;  
Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall  
The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,  
And for the engines of a mightier Mars  
Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.  
The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave  
That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave  
Lost then their merriment, nor look to play  
With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground  
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :  
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,  
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously,  
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep  
Glided in line upon the windless deep :  
For in those days was first seen low and black  
Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack,  
And neath their stern revolv'd the twisted fan.  
Many I knew as soon as I might scan,  
The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,  
The *Hogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright  
Others that I remember now no more ;  
But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,

## *New Poems*

With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,  
The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,  
Whereon sail'd George, who in her gig had flown  
The silken ensign by our sisters sewn.  
The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame  
To England's proudest ship had given her name,  
And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene  
Had scarce more honour'd than accustom'd been,—  
Was two years since to his last haven past :  
I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast  
One morn as I sat looking on the sea,  
When thus all England's grief came first to me,  
Who hold my childhood favour'd that I knew  
So well the face that won at Waterloo.

But now 'tis other wars, and other men ;—  
The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—  
Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found :  
A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,  
The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers,  
And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.  
Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,  
The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

### 5

O LOVE, I complain,  
Complain of thee often,  
Because thou dost soften  
My being to pain :

Thou makest me fear  
The mind that createth,  
That loves not nor hateth  
In justice austere ;

## *New Poems*

Who, ere he make one,  
With millions togeth,  
And lightly destroyeth  
Whate'er is begun.

An' wer't not for thee,  
My glorious passion,  
My heart I could fashion  
To sternness, as he.

But thee, Love, he made  
Lest man should defy him,  
Connive and outvie him,  
And not be afraid :

Nay, thee, Love, he gave  
His terrors to cover,  
And turn to a lover  
His insolent slave.

## 6

### THE SOUTH WIND

THE south wind rose at dusk of the winter day,  
The warm breath of the western sea  
Circling wrapp'd the isle with his cloke of cloud,  
And it now reach'd even to me, at dusk of the day,  
And moan'd in the branches aloud :  
While here and there, in patches of dark space,  
A star shone forth from its heavenly place,  
As a spark that is borne in the smoky chase ;  
And, looking up, there fell on my face—  
Could it be drops of rain  
Soft as the wind, that fell on my face ?  
Gossamers light as threads of the summer dawn,

## *New Poems*

Suck'd by the sun from midmost calms of the main  
From groves of coral islands secretly drawn,  
O'er half the round of earth to be driven,  
Now to fall on my face  
In silky skeins spun from the mists of heaven.

Who art thou, in wind and darkness and soft rain  
Thyself that robest, that bendest in sighing pines  
To whisper thy truth? that usest for signs  
A hurried glimpse of the moon, the glance of a star  
In the rifted sky?  
Who art thou, that with thee I  
Woo and am wooed?  
That robing thyself in darkness and soft rain  
Choolest my chosen solitude,  
Coming so far  
To tell thy secret again,  
As a mother her child, in her folding arm  
Of a winter night by a flickering fire,  
Telleth the same tale o'er and o'er  
With gentle voice, and I never tire,  
So imperceptibly changeth the charm,  
As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower,  
—Like as the stem that beareth the flower  
By trembling is knit to power;—  
Ah! long ago  
In thy first rapture I renounced my lot,  
The vanity, the despondency and the woe,  
And seeking thee to know  
Well was 't for me, and evermore  
I am thine, I know not what.

For me thou seekest ever, me wondering a day  
In the eternal alternations, me  
Free for a stolen moment of chance  
To dream a beautiful dream



## *New Poems*

In the everlasting dance  
Of speechless worlds, 'the unsearchable scheme,  
To me thou findest the way,  
Me and whomsoe'er  
I have found my dream to share  
Still with thy charm encircling ; even to-night  
To me and my love in darkness and soft rain  
Under the sighing pines thou comest again,  
And staying our speech with mystery of delight,  
Of the kiss that I give a wonder thou makest,  
And the kiss that I take thou takest.

### 7

I CLIMB the mossy bank of the glade :  
My love awaiteth me in the shade.

She holdeth a book that she never heedeth :  
In Goddës work her spirit readeth.

She is all to me, and I to her :  
When we embrace, the stars confer.

O my love, from beyond the sky  
I am calling thy heart, and who but I ?

Fresh as love is the breeze of June,  
In the dappled shade of the summer noon.

Catullus, throwing his heart away,  
Gave fewer kisses every day.

Heracleitus, spending his youth  
In search of wisdom, had less of truth.

Flame of fire was the poet's desire :  
The thinker found that life was fire.

O my love ! my song is done :  
My kiss hath both their fires in one.

## *New Poems*

### 8

To my love I whisper, and say  
Knowest thou why I love thee?—Nay:  
Nay, she saith; O tell me again.—

When in her ear the secret I tell,  
She smileth with joy incredible—

Ha! she is vain—O nay—  
Then tell us!—Nay, O nay.

But this is in my heart,  
That Love is Nature's perfect art,  
And man hath got his fancy hence,  
To clothe his thought in forms of sense.

Fair are thy works, O man, and fair  
Thy dreams of soul in garments rare,  
Beautiful past compare,  
Yea, godlike when thou hast the skill  
To steal a stir of the heavenly thrill:

But O, have care, have care!  
'Tis envious even to dare:  
And many a fiend is watching well  
To flush thy reed with the fire of hell.

### 9

My delight and thy delight  
Walking, like two angels white,  
In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire  
Twining to a tongue of fire,  
Leaping live, and laughing higher;

## *New Poems*

Thro' the everlasting strife  
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,  
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,  
Whence the million stars were strewn,  
Why each atom knows its own,  
How, in spite of woe and death,  
Gay is life, and sweet is breath :

This he taught us, this we knew,  
Happy in his science true,  
Hand in hand as we stood  
Neath the shadows of the wood.  
Heart to heart as we lay  
In the dawning of the day.

### IO

## SEPTUAGESIMA

Now all the windows with frost are blinded,  
As punctual day with greedy smile  
Lifts like a Cyclops evil-minded  
His ruddy eyeball over the isle.

In an hour 'tis paled, in an hour ascended  
A dazzling light in the cloudless grey.  
Steel is the ice ; the snow unblended  
Is trod to dust on the white highway.

The lambkins frisk ; the shepherd is melting  
Drink for the ewes with a fire of straw :  
The red flames leap at the wild air pelting  
Bitterly thro' the leafless shaw.

## *New Poems*

Around, from many a village steeple  
The sabbath-bells hum over the snow :  
I give a blessing to parson and people  
Across the fields as away I go.

Over the hills and over the meadows  
Gay is my way till day be done :  
Blue as the heaven are all the shadows,  
And every light is gold in the sun.

### I I

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,  
His waves come rolling evermore ;  
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,  
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I,  
Under the pine upon the hill,  
The sadness of the clouded sky,  
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,  
The seamew's melancholy cry  
With loving fancy suit but ill.

We talk of moons and cooling suns,  
Of geologic time and tide,  
The eternal sluggards that abide  
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent  
That man should guess her dreary scheme  
Lest he should live too well content  
In his fair house of mirth and dream :

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,  
His heart that wearies of desire,  
Being so fugitive a part  
Of what so slowly must expire.

## *New Poems*

She in her agelong toil and care  
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,  
Mocking alike hope and despair.

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,  
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,  
Days that are one with human art,  
Worthy of the Virgilian muse,  
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

### I 2

RIDING adown the country lanes  
One day in spring,  
Heavy at heart with all the pains  
Of man's imagining :—

The mist was not yet melted quite  
Into the sky :  
The small round sun was dazzling white,  
The merry larks sang high :

The grassy northern slopes were laid  
In sparkling dew,  
Out of the slow-retreating shade  
Turning from sleep anew :

Deep in the sunny vale a burn  
Ran with the lane,  
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern  
It laughed in joyful strain :

And primroses shot long and lush  
Their cluster'd cream ;  
Robin and wren and amorous thrush  
Carol'd above the stream :

## *New Poems*

The stillness of the lenten air  
    Call'd into sound  
The motions of all life that were  
    In field and farm around :  
So fair it was, so sweet and bright,  
    The jocund Spring  
Awoke in me the old delight  
    Of man's imagining,  
Riding adown the country lanes :  
    The larks sang high.—  
O heart ! for all thy griefs and pains  
    Thou shalt be loth to die.

### 13

#### PATER FILIO

SENSE with keenest edge unused,  
    Yet unsteel'd by scathing fire ;  
Lovely feet as yet unbruised  
    On the ways of dark desire ;  
Sweetest hope that lookest smiling  
O'er the wilderness defiling !  
Why such beauty, to be blighted  
    By the swarm of foul destruction ?  
Why such innocence delighted,  
    When sin stalks to thy seduction ?  
All the litanies e'er chaunted  
Shall not keep thy faith undaunted.  
I have pray'd the sainted Morning  
    To unclasp her hands to hold thee ;  
From resignful Eve's adorning  
    Stol'n a robe of peace to enfold thee :  
With all charms of man's contriving  
Arm'd thee for thy lonely striving.

## *New Poems*

Me too once unthinking Nature,  
—Whence Love's timeless mockery took me,—  
Fashion'd so divine a creature,  
Yea, and like a beast forsook me.  
I forgave, but tell the measure  
Of her crime in thee, my treasure.

### 14

#### NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled  
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun  
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed ;  
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands  
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands  
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear  
The teams following and crossing far and near,  
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands  
Of the striped fields ; and behind them firk and prance  
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance :  
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline  
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)  
They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by  
Above the lane they shout lifting the share,  
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air ;  
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie  
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out  
The small wrens glide  
With a happy note of cheer,  
And yellow amoretts flutter above and about,  
Gay, familiar in fear.

## *New Poems*

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky  
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,  
All the afternoon to the gardens fly,  
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter  
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel :  
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,  
In an isolated tree a congregation  
Of starlings chatter and chide,  
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel :  
Suddenly they hush as one,—  
The tree top springs,—  
And off, with a whirr of wings,  
They fly by the score  
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more  
Dispute for the roosts ; and from the unseen nation  
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,  
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,  
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly,  
While falls the night on them self-occupied ;  
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,  
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,  
And soon to bury in snow  
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole,  
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole  
Of how her end shall be.

### WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—  
Its course is done :  
But nothing tells the place  
Of the setting sun.



## *New Poems*

The hazy darkness deepens,  
And up the lane  
You may hear, but cannot see,  
The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums  
In the farm hard by :  
Its lowering smoke is lost  
In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,  
And all night through  
The dropping will not cease  
In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house  
Must keep his chair :  
He knows he will never again  
Breathe the spring air :

His heart is worn with work ;  
He is giddy and sick  
If he rise to go as far  
As the nearest rick :

He thinks of his morn of life,  
His hale, strong years ;  
And braves as he may the night  
Of darkness and tears.

### 16

SINCE we loved,—(the earth that shook  
As we kissed, fresh beauty took)—  
Love hath been as poets paint,  
Life as heaven is to a saint ;  
All my joys my hope excel,  
All my work hath prosper'd well,  
All my songs have happy been,  
O my love, my life, my queen.

## *New Poems*

17

WHEN Death to either shall come,—

I pray it be first to me,—

Be happy as ever at home,

If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own ;

And sing to the child on thy knee,

Or read to thyself alone

The songs that I made for thee.

18

### WISHES

I WISH'D to sing thy grace, but nought

Found upon earth that could compare :

Some day, maybe, in heaven, I thought,—

If I should win the welcome there,—

There might I make thee many a song :

But now it is enough to say

I ne'er have done our life the wrong

Of wishing for a happier day.

19

### A LOVE LYRIC

WHY art thou sad, my dearest ?

What terror is it thou fearest,

Braver who art than I

The fiend to defy ?

Why art thou sad, my dearest ?

And why in tears appearest,

Closer than I that wert

At hiding thy hurt ?

## *New Poems*

Why art thou sad, my dearest,  
Since now my voice thou hearest?  
Who with a kiss restore  
Thy valour of yore.

20

### EPΩΣ

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?  
Thou idol of the human race,  
Thou tyrant of the human heart,  
The flower of lovely youth that art;  
Yea, and that standest in thy youth  
An image of eternal Truth,  
With thy exuberant flesh so fair,  
That only Pheidias might compare,  
Ere from his chaste marmoreal form  
Time had decayed the colours warm;  
Like to his gods in thy proud dress,  
Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,  
For in thy face is nought to find,  
Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,  
That shadows neither love nor guile,  
But shameless will and power immense,  
In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?  
I dream thou knowest it is nought,  
And wouldst in darkness come, but thou  
Makest the light where'er thou go.  
Ah yet no victim of thy grace,  
None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,  
Hath cared to look upon thy face.

# *New Poems*

21

## THE FAIR BRASS

AN effigy of brass  
Trodden by careless feet  
Of worshippers that pass,  
Beautiful and complete,

Lieth in the sombre aisle  
Of this old church unwreckt,  
And still from modern style  
Shielded by kind neglect.

It shows a warrior arm'd :  
Across his iron breast  
His hands by death are charm'd  
To leave his sword at rest,

Wherewith he led his men  
O'ersea, and smote to hell  
The astonisht Saracen,  
Nor doubted he did well.

Would wé could teach our sons  
His trust in face of doom,  
Or give our bravest ones  
A comparable tomb :

Such as to look on shrives  
The heart of half its care ;  
So in each line survives  
The spirit that made it fair ;

So fair the characters,  
With which the dusty scroll,  
That tells his title, stirs  
A requiem for his soul.

## *New Poems*

Yet dearer far to me,  
And brave as he are they,  
Who fight by land and sea  
For England at this day;

Whose vile memorials,  
In mournful marbles gilt,  
Deface the beauteous walls  
By growing glory built :

Heirs of our antique shrines,  
Sires of our future fame,  
Whose starry honour shines  
In many a noble name

Across the deathful days,  
Link'd in the brotherhood  
That loves our country's praise,  
And lives for heavenly good.

### 22

## THE DUTEOUS HEART

SPIRIT of grace and beauty,  
Whom men so much miscall :  
Maidenly, modest duty,  
I cry thee fair befall !

Pity for them that shun thee,  
Sorrow for them that hate,  
Glory, hath any won thee  
To dwell in high estate !

But rather thou delightest  
To walk in humble ways,  
Keeping thy favour brightest  
Uncrown'd by foolish praise ;

## *New Poems*

In such retirement dwelling,  
Where, hath the worldling been,  
He straight returneth telling  
Of sights that he hath seen,

Of simple men and truest  
Faces of girl and boy;  
The souls whom thou enduest  
With gentle peace and joy.

Fair from my song befall thee,  
Spirit of beauty and grace!  
Men that so much miscall thee  
Have never seen thy face.

### 23

#### THE IDLE FLOWERS

I HAVE sown upon the fields  
Eyebright and Pimpernel,  
And Pansy and Poppy-seed  
Ripen'd and scatter'd well,

And silver Lady-smock  
The meads with light to fill,  
Cowslip and Buttercup,  
Daisy and Daffodil;

King-cup and Fleur-de-lys  
Upon the marsh to meet  
With Comfrey, Watermint,  
Loose-strife and Meadowsweet;

And all along the stream  
My care hath not forgot  
Crowfoot's white galaxy  
And love's Forget-me-not:

## *New Poems*

And where high grasses wave  
Shall great Moon-daisies blink,  
With Rattle and Sorrel sharp  
And Robin's ragged pink.

Thick on the woodland floor  
Gay company shall be,  
Primrose and Hyacinth  
And frail Anemone,

Perennial Strawberry-bloom,  
Woodsorrel's pencilled veil,  
Dishevel'd Willow-weed  
And Orchis purple and pale,

Bugle, that blushes blue,  
And Woodruff's snowy gem,  
Proud Foxglove's finger-bells  
And Spurge with milky stem.

High on the downs so bare,  
Where thou dost love to climb,  
Pink Thrift and Milkwort are,  
Lotus and scented Thyme;

And in the shady lanes  
Bold Arum's hood of green,  
Herb Robert, Violet,  
Starwort and Celandine;

And by the dusty road  
Bedstraw and Mullein tall,  
With red Valerian  
And Toadflax on the wall,

Yarrow and Chicory,  
That hath for hue no like,  
Silene and Mallow mild  
And Agrimony's spike,

## *New Poems*

Blue-eyed Veronicas  
And grey-faced Scabious  
And downy Silverweed  
And striped Convolvulus:

Harebell shall haunt the banks,  
And thro' the hedgerow peer  
Withwind and Snapdragon  
And Nightshade's flower of fear.

And where men never sow,  
Have I my Thistles set,  
Ragwort and stiff Wormwood  
And straggling Mignonette,

Bugloss and Burdock rank  
And prickly Teasel high,  
With Umbels yellow and white,  
That come to kexes dry.

Pale Chlora shalt thou find,  
Sun-loving Centaury,  
Cranesbill and Sinjunwort,  
Cinquefoil and Betony:

Shock-headed Dandelion,  
That drank the fire of the sun:  
Hawkweed and Marigold,  
Cornflower and Campion.

Let Oak and Ash grow strong,  
Let Beech her branches spread;  
Let Grass and Barley throng  
And waving Wheat for bread;

Be share and sickle bright  
To labour at all hours;  
For thee and thy delight  
I have made the idle flowers.



## *New Poems*

But now 'tis Winter, child,  
And bitter northwinds blow,  
The ways are wet and wild,  
The land is laid in snow.

### 24

#### DUNSTONE HILL

A COTTAGE built of native stone  
Stands on the mountain-moor alone,  
High from man's dwelling on the wide  
And solitary mountain-side,  
The purple mountain-side, where all  
The dewy night the meteors fall,  
And the pale stars musically set  
To the watery bells of the rivulet,  
And all day long, purple and dun,  
The vast moors stretch beneath the sun,  
The wide wind passeth fresh and hale,  
And whirring grouse and blackcock sail.

Ah, heavenly Peace, where dost thou dwell?  
Surely 'twas here thou hadst a cell,  
Till flaming Love, wandering astray  
With fury and blood, drove thee away.—

Far down across the valley deep  
The town is hid in smoky sleep,  
At moonless nightfall wakening slow  
Upon the dark with lurid glow:

Beyond, afar the widening view  
Merges into the soften'd blue,  
Cornfield and forest, hill and stream,  
Fair England in her pastoral dream.

## *New Poems*

To one who looketh from this hill  
Life seems asleep, all is so still :  
Nought passeth save the travelling shade  
Of clouds on high that float and fade :

Nor since this landscape saw the sun  
Might other motion o'er it run,  
Till to man's scheming heart it came  
To make a steed of steel and flame.

Him may you mark in every vale  
Moving beneath his fleecy trail,  
And tell whene'er the motions die  
Where every town and hamlet lie.

He gives the distance life to-day,  
Rushing upon his level'd way  
From man's abode to man's abode,  
And mocks the Roman's vaunted road,

Which o'er the moor purple and dun  
Still wanders white beneath the sun,  
Deserted now of men and lone  
Save for this cot of native stone.

There ever by the whiten'd wall  
Standeth a maiden fair and tall,  
And all day long in vacant dream  
Watcheth afar the flying steam.

## 25

### SCREAMING TARN

THE saddest place that e'er I saw  
Is the deep tarn above the inn  
That crowns the mountain-road, whereby  
One southward bound his way must win.

## *New Poems*

Sunk on the table of the ridge  
From its deep shores is nought to see:  
The unresting wind lashes and chills  
Its shivering ripples ceaselessly.

Three sides 'tis banked with stones aslant,  
And down the fourth the rushes grow,  
And yellow sedge fringing the edge  
With lengthen'd image all arow.

'Tis square and black, and on its face  
When noon is still, the mirror'd sky  
Looks dark and further from the earth  
Than when you gaze at it on high.

At mid of night, if one be there,  
—So say the people of the hill—  
A fearful shriek of death is heard,  
One sudden scream both loud and shrill.

And some have seen on stilly nights,  
And when the moon was clear and round,  
Bubbles which to the surface swam  
And burst as if they held the sound.—

'Twas in the days ere hapless Charles  
Losing his crown had lost his head,  
This tale is told of him who kept  
The inn upon the watershed:

He was a lowbred ruin'd man  
Whom lawless times set free from fear:  
One evening to his house there rode  
A young and gentle cavalier.

With curling hair and linen fair  
And jewel-hilted sword he went;  
The horse he rode he had ridden far,  
And he was with his journey spent.

## *New Poems*

He asked a lodging for the night,  
His valise from his steed unbound,  
**He** let none bear it but himself  
And set it by him on the ground.  
'Here's gold or jewels,' thought the host,  
'That's carrying south to find the king.'  
He chattered many a loyal word,  
And scraps of royal airs gan sing.  
His guest thereat grew more at ease  
And o'er his wine he gave a toast,  
But little ate, and to his room  
Carried his sack behind the host.  
'Now rest you well,' the host he said,  
But of his wish the word fell wide;  
Nor did he now forget his son  
Who fell in fight by Cromwell's side.  
Revenge and poverty have brought  
Full gentler heart than his to crime;  
And he was one by nature rude,  
Born to foul deeds at any time.  
With unshod feet at dead of night  
In stealth he to the guest-room crept,  
Lantern and dagger in his hand,  
And stabbed his victim while he slept.  
But as he struck a scream there came,  
A fearful scream so loud and shrill:  
He whelm'd the face with pillows o'er,  
And lean'd till all had long been still.  
Then to the face the flame he held  
To see there should no life remain:—  
When lo! his brutal heart was quell'd:  
'Twas a fair woman he had slain.

## *New Poems*

The tan upon her face was paint,  
The manly hair was torn away,  
Soft was the breast that he had pierced ;  
Beautiful in her death she lay.

His was no heart to faint at crime,  
Tho' half he wished the deed undone.  
He pulled the valise from the bed  
To find what booty he had won.

He cut the straps, and pushed within  
His murderous fingers to their theft.  
A deathly sweat came o'er his brow,  
He had no sense nor meaning left.

He touched not gold, it was not cold,  
It was not hard, it felt like flesh.  
He drew out by the curling hair  
A young man's head, and murder'd fresh ;

A young man's head, cut by the neck.  
But what was dreader still to see,  
Her whom he had slain he saw again,  
The twain were like as like can be.

Brother and sister if they were,  
Both in one shroud they now were wound,—  
Across his back and down the stair,  
Out of the house without a sound.

He made his way unto the tarn,  
The night was dark and still and dank ;  
The ripple chuckling neath the boat  
Laughed as he drew it to the bank.

Upon the bottom of the boat  
He laid his burden flat and low,  
And on them laid the square sandstones  
That round about the margin go.

## *New Poems*

Stone upon stone he weighed them down,  
Until the boat would hold no more ;  
The freeboard now was scarce an inch :  
He stripp'd his clothes and push'd from shore.

All naked to the middle pool  
He swam behind in the dark night ;  
And there he let the water in  
And sank his terror out of sight.

He swam ashore, and donn'd his dress,  
And scraped his bloody fingers clean ;  
Ran home and on his victim's steed  
Mounted, and never more was seen.

But to a comrade ere he died  
He told his story guess'd of none :  
So from his lips the crime returned  
T'ó haunt the spot where it was done.

## 26

### THE ISLE OF ACHILLES

(FROM THE GREEK)

Τὸν φίλτατόν σοι παῖδ' ἐμοί τ', Ἀχιλλέα  
ὄψει δόμους ναίοντα νησιωτικούς  
Λευκήν κατ' ἀκτὴν ἐντὸς Εὐξείνου πόρου.

Eur. And. 1250.

VOYAGING northwards by the western strand  
Of the Euxine sea we came to where the land  
Sinks low in salt morass and wooded plain :  
Here mighty Ister pushes to the main,  
Forking his turbid flood in channels three  
To plough the sands wherewith he chokes the sea.

## *New Poems*

Against his middle arm, not many a mile  
In the offing of black water is the isle  
Named of Achilles, or as Leukê known,  
Which tender Thetis, counselling alone  
With her wise sire beneath the ocean-wave  
Unto her child's departed spirit gave,  
Where he might still his love and fame enjoy,  
Through the vain Danaan cause fordone at Troy.  
Thither Achilles passed, and long fulfill'd  
His earthly lot, as the high gods had will'd,  
Far from the rivalries of men, from strife,  
From arms, from woman's love and toil of life.  
Now of his lone abode I will unfold  
What there I saw, or was by others told.

There is in truth a temple on the isle;  
Therein a wooden statue of rude style  
And workmanship antique with helm of lead:  
Else all is desert, uninhabited;  
Only a few goats browse the wind-swept rocks,  
And oft the stragglers of their starving flocks  
Are caught and sacrificed by whomsoe'er,  
Whoever of chance or purpose hither fare:  
About the fence lie strewn their bleaching bones.

But in the temple jewels and precious stones,  
Upheapt with golden rings and vials lie,  
Thankofferings to Achilles, and thereby,  
Written or scratch'd upon the walls in view,  
Inscriptions, with the givers' names thereto,  
Some in Romaic character, some Greek,  
As each man in the tongue that he might speak  
Wrote verse of praise, or prayer for good to come,  
To Achilles most, but to Patroclus some;  
For those who strongly would Achilles move  
Approach him by the pathway of his love.

## *New Poems*

Thousands of birds frequent the sheltering shrine,  
The dippers and the swimmers of the brine,  
Sea-mew and gull and diving cormorant,  
Fishers that on the high cliff make their haunt  
Sheer inaccessible, and sun themselves  
Huddled arow upon the narrow shelves :—  
And surely no like wonder e'er hath been  
As that such birds should keep the temple clean ;  
But thus they do : at earliest dawn of day  
They flock to sea and in the waters play,  
And when they well have wet their plumage light,  
Back to the sanctuary they take flight  
Splashing the walls and columns with fresh brine,  
Till all the stone doth fairly drip and shine,  
When off again they skim asea for more  
And soon returning sprinkle steps and floor,  
And sweep all cleanly with their wide-spread wings.

From other men I have learnt further things.  
If any of free purpose, thus they tell,  
Sail'd hither to consult the oracle,—  
For oracle there was,—they sacrificed  
Such victims as they brought, if such sufficed,  
And some they slew, some to the god set free :  
But they who driven from their course at sea  
Chanced on the isle, took of the goats thereon  
And pray'd Achilles to accept his own.  
Then made they a gift, and when they had offer'd once,  
If to their question there was no response,  
They added to the gift and asked again ;  
Yea twice and more, until the god should deign  
Answer to give, their offering they renew'd ;  
Whereby great riches to the shrine ensued.  
And when both sacrifice and gifts were made  
They worship'd at the shrine, and as they pray'd



## *New Poems*

Sailors aver that often hath been seen  
A man like to a god, of warrior mien,  
A beauteous form of figure swift and strong ;  
Down on his shoulders his light hair hung long  
And his full armour was enchast with gold :  
While some, who with their eyes might nought behold,  
Say that with music strange the air was stir'd ;  
And some there are, who have both seen and heard :  
And if a man wish to be favour'd more,  
He need but spend one night upon the shore ;  
To him in sleep Achilles will appear  
And lead him to his tent, and with good cheer  
Show him all friendliness that men desire ;  
Patroclus pours the wine, and he his lyre  
Takes from the pole and plays the strains thereon  
Which Cheiron taught him first on Pelion.

These things I tell as they were told to me,  
Nor do I question but it well may be :  
For sure I am that, if man ever was,  
Achilles was a hero, both because  
Of his high birth and beauty, his country's call  
His valour of soul, his early death withal,  
For Homer's praise, the crown of human art ;  
And that above all praise he had at heart  
A gentler passion in her sovran sway,  
And when his love died threw his life away.

## *New Poems*

27

### AN ANNIVERSARY

HE

BRIGHT, my belovèd, be thy day,  
This eve of Summer's fall :  
And Autumn mass his flowers gay  
To crown thy festival !

SHE

I care not if the morn be bright,  
Living in thy love-rays :  
No flower I need for my delight,  
Being crownèd with thy praise.

HE

O many years and joyfully  
This sun to thee return ;  
Ever all men speak well of thee,  
Nor any angel mourn !

SHE

For length of life I would not pray,  
If thy life were to seek ;  
Nor ask what men and angels say  
But when of thee they speak.

HE

Arise ! The sky hath heard my song,  
The flowers o'erhear thy praise ;  
And little loves are waking long  
To wish thee happy days.

## *New Poems*

28

### REGINA CARA

JUBILEE-SONG, FOR MUSIC, 1897

HARK ! The world is full of thy praise,  
England's Queen of many days ;  
Who, knowing how to rule the free,  
Hast given a crown to monarchy.

Honour, Truth and growing Peace  
Follow Britannia's wide increase,  
And Nature yield her strength unknown  
To the wisdom born beneath thy throne !

In wisdom and love firm is thy fame :  
Enemies bow to revere thy name :  
The world shall never tire to tell  
Praise of the queen that reignèd well.

O FELIX ANIMA, DOMINA PRAECLARA.  
AMORE SEMPER CORONABERE  
REGINA CARA.

# LATER POEMS

OCCASIONAL ODES &c.



## PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

1. *Monthly Review*. February, 1903.
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# LATER POEMS

## I

### RECOLLECTIONS OF SOLITUDE

#### AN ELEGY

ENDED are many days, and now but few  
Remain ; since therefore it is happy and true  
That memoried joys keep ever their delight,  
Like steadfast stars in the blue vault of night,  
While hours of pain (among those heavenly spheres  
Like falling meteors, the martyr's tears)  
Dart their long trails at random, and anon,  
Ere we exclaim, pass, and for aye are gone ;  
Therefore my heedful thought will oft restore  
The long light-hearted days that are no more,  
Save where in her memorial crypt they shine  
Spangling the silent past with joy divine.

But why in dream of this enchanted mood  
Should all my boyhood seem a solitude ?  
Good reason know I, when I wander there,  
In that transmuted scene, why all is fair ;  
The woods as when in holiday of spring  
Million buds burst, and flowers are blossoming ;  
The meadows deep in grass, the fields unshorn  
In beauty of the multitudinous corn,  
Where the strait alleys hide me, wall'd between  
High bloomy stalks and rustling banners green ;  
The gardens, too, in dazzling hues full-blown,  
With wafted scent and blazing petals strewn ;  
The orchards reddening thro' the patient hours,  
While idle autumn in his mossy bowers

## *Later Poems*

Inviteth meditation to endear  
The sanctuaries of the mellowing year;  
And every spot wherein I loved to stray  
Hath borrowed radiance of eternal day;  
But why am I ever alone, alone?  
Here in the corner of a field my throne,  
Now in the branching chair of some tall tree  
Drinking the gale in bird-like liberty;  
Or to the seashore wandered in the sun  
To watch the fateful waves break one by one ;  
Or if on basking downs supine I lie  
Bathing my spirit in blue calms of the sky ;  
Or to the river bank am stolen by night  
Harkening unto the moonlit ripple bright  
That warbles o'er the shallows of smooth stone ;  
Why should my memory find me all alone,  
When I had such companions every day  
Jocund and dear? 'Twixt glimpses of their play  
'Tis a vast solitude, wherein I see  
Only myself and what I came to be.

Yet never think, dear spirits, if now ye may  
Remember aught of that brief earthly day,  
Ere ye the mournful Stygian river crost,  
From our familiar home too early lost,—  
O never think that I your tears forget,  
Or that I loved not well, or love not yet.  
Nor ye who held my heart in passion's chain,—  
As kings and queens succeed in glorious reign—  
When, as a man, I made you to outvie  
God's work, and, as a god, then set you by  
Among the sainted throng in holiest shrine  
Of mythic creed and poetry divine;  
True was my faith, and still your loves endure,  
The jewels of my fancy, bright and pure.

## *Later Poems*

Nor only in fair places do I see  
The picture fair now it has ceased to be :  
For fate once led me, and myself some days  
Did I devote, to dull laborious ways,  
By soaring thought detained to tread full low,—  
Yea might I say unbeauteous paths of woe  
And dreary abodes, had not my youthful sprite  
Hallow'd each nook with legends of delight.

Ah ! o'er that smoky town who looketh now  
By winter sunset from the dark hill-brow,  
Under the dying trees exultantly  
Nursing the sting of human tragedy ?  
Or in that little room upstairs so high,  
Where London's roofs in thickest huddle lie,  
Who now returns at evening to entice  
To his fireside the joys of Paradise ?  
Once sacred was that hearth, and bright the air :  
The flame of man's redemption flickered there,  
In worship of those spirits, whose deathless fames  
Have thrilled the stars of heaven to hear their names .  
They that excell'd in wisdom to create  
Beauty, with mortal passion conquering fate ;  
And, mid the sovran powers of elder time,  
The loveliness of music and new rhyme,  
The masters young that first enthralled me ;  
Of whom if I should name, whom then but thee,  
Sweet Shelley, or the boy whose book was found  
Thrust in thy bosom on thy body drowned ?

O mighty Muse, wooer of virgin thought,  
Beside thy charm all else counteth as nought ;  
The revelation of thy smile doth make  
Him whom thou lovest reckless for thy sake ;  
Earthborn of suffering, that knowest well  
To call thine own, and with enamouring spell



## *Later Poems*

Feedest the stolen powers of godlike youth  
On dear imagination's only truth,  
Building with song a temple of desire ;  
And with the yearning music of thy quire,  
In nuptial sacrament of thought and sense  
Hallowest for toil the hours of indolence :  
Thou in thy melancholic beauty drest,  
Subduest ill to serve thy fair behest,  
With tragic tears, and sevenfold purified  
Silver of mirth ; and with extremest pride,  
With secret doctrine and unfathomed lore  
Remainest yet a child for evermore,  
The only enchantress of the earth that art  
To cheer his day and staunch man's bleeding heart.

O heavenly Muse, for heavenly thee we call  
Who in the fire of love refinest all,  
Accurst is he who heark'neth not thy voice ;  
But happy he who, numbered of thy choice,  
Walketh aloof from nature's clouded plan :  
For all God's world is but the thought of man ;  
Wherein hast thou re-formed a world apart,  
The mutual mirror of his better heart.  
There is no foulness, misery, nor sin,  
But he who loves finds his desire therein,  
And there with thee in lonely commerce lives :  
Nay, all that nature gave or fortune gives,  
Joys that his spirit is most jealous of,  
His only-embraced and best-deserving love,  
Who walketh in the noon of heavenly praise,  
The troubled godhead of his children's gaze,  
Wear thine eternity, and are loved best  
By thee transfigured and in thee possess ;  
Who madest beauty, and from thy boundless store  
Of beauty shalt create for evermore.

1900.

## *Later Poems*

2

### A VIGNETTE

Among the meadows  
lightly going,  
With worship and joy  
my heart o'erflowing,

Far from town  
and toil of living,  
To a holy day  
my spirit giving, . . .

\* \* \*

Thou tender flower,  
I kneel beside thee  
Wondering why God  
so beautified thee.—

An answering thought  
within me springeth,  
A bloom of the mind  
her vision bringeth.

Between the dim hills'  
distant azure  
And flowery foreground  
of sparkling pleasure

I see the company  
of figures sainted,  
For whom the picture  
of earth was painted,

## *Later Poems*

Those robèd seërs  
    who made man's story  
The crown of Nature,  
    Her cause his glory.

They walk in the city  
    which they have builded,  
The city of God  
    from evil shielded :

To them for canopy  
    the vault of heaven,  
The flowery earth  
    for carpet is given ;

Whereon I wander  
    not unknowing,  
With worship and joy  
    my heart o'erflowing.

1901.

### 3

## MILLICENT

THOU dimpled Millicent, of merry guesses,  
Strong-limb'd and tall, tossing thy wayward tresses,  
What mystery of the heart can so surprise  
The mirth and music of thy brimming eyes ?

Pale-brow, thou knowest not and diest to learn  
The mortal secret that doth in thee burn ;  
With look imploring ' If you love me, tell,  
What is it in me that you love so well ?'

And suddenly thou stakest all thy charms,  
And leapest on me ; and in thy circling arms  
When almost stifled with their wild embrace,  
I feel thy hot tears sheltering on my face.

1901.

## *Later Poems*

### 4

#### VIVAMUS

WHEN thou didst give thy love to me,  
Asking no more of gods or men  
I vow'd I would contented be,  
If Fate should grant us summers ten.

But now that twice the term is sped,  
And ever young my heart and gay,  
I fear the words that then I said,  
And turn my face from Fate away.

To bid thee happily good-bye  
I have no hope that I can see,  
No way that I shall bravely die,  
Unless I give my life for thee.

1901.

### 5

ONE grief of thine  
if truth be confest  
Was joy to me ;  
for it drave to my breast  
Thee, to my heart  
to find thy rest.

How long it was  
I never shall know :  
I watcht the earth  
so stately and slow,  
And the ancient things  
that waste and grow.

## *Later Poems*

But now for me  
    what speed devours  
Our heavenly life,  
    our brilliant hours!  
How fast they fly,  
    the stars and flowers!

### 6

IN still midsummer night  
    When the moon is late  
And the stars all watery and white  
    For her coming wait,  
A spirit, whose eyes are possest  
    By wonder new,  
Passeth—her arms upon her breast  
    Enwrapt from the dew  
In a raiment of azure fold  
    With diaper  
Of flower'd embroidery of gold  
    Bestarr'd with silver.  
The daisy folk are awake  
    Their carpet to spread,  
And the thron'd stars gazing on her make  
    Fresh crowns for her head,  
Netted in her floating hair  
    As she drifteth free  
Between the star-blossoming air  
    And starry lea,  
From the silent-shadow'd vale  
    By the west wind drawn  
Aloft to melt into the pale  
    Moonrise of dawn.

## *Later Poems*

### 7

#### MELANCHOLIA

THE sickness of desire, that in dark days  
Looks on the imagination of despair,  
Forgetteth man, and stinteth God his praise;  
Nor but in sleep findeth a cure for care.

Incertainty that once gave scope to dream  
Of laughing enterprise and glory untold,  
Is now a blackness that no stars redeem,  
A wall of terror in a night of cold.

Fool! thou that hast impossibly desired  
And now impatiently despair'st, see  
How nought is changed: Joy's wisdom is attired  
Splendid for others' eyes if not for thee:

Not love or beauty or youth from earth is fled:  
If they delite thee not, 'tis thou art dead.

1904.

### 8

#### TO THE PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

SINCE now from woodland mist and flooded clay  
I am fled beside the steep Devonian shore,  
Nor stand for welcome at your gothic door,  
'Neath the fair tower of Magdalen and May,  
Such tribute, Warren, as fond poets pay  
For generous esteem, I write, not more  
Enhearten'd than my need is, reckoning o'er  
My life-long wanderings on the heavenly way:

But well-befriended we become good friends,  
Well-honour'd honourable; and all attain  
Somewhat by fathering what fortune sends.  
I bid your presidency a long reign,  
True friend; and may your praise to greater ends  
Aid better men than I, nor me in vain.

## *Later Poems*

### 9

#### TO JOSEPH JOACHIM

BELOV'D of all to whom that Muse is dear  
Who hid her spirit of rapture from the Greek,  
Whereby our art excelleth the antique,  
Perfecting formal beauty to the ear;  
Thou that hast been in England many a year  
The interpreter who left us nought to seek,  
Making Beethoven's inmost passion speak,  
Bringing the soul of great Sebastian near.

Their music liveth ever, and 'tis just  
That thou, good Joachim, so high thy skill,  
Rank (as thou shalt upon the heavenly hill)  
Laurel'd with them, for thy ennobling trust  
Remember'd when thy loving hand is still  
And every ear that heard thee stopt with dust.

## *Later Poems*

10

### TO THOS. FLOYD

How fares it, friend, since I by Fate annoy'd  
Left the old home in need of livelier play  
For body and mind? How fare, this many a day,  
The stubborn thews and ageless heart of Floyd?  
If not too well with country sport employ'd,  
Visit my flock, the breezy hill that they  
Choose for their fold; and see, for thence you may,  
From rising walls all roofless yet and void,

The lovely city, thronging tower and spire,  
The mind of the wide landscape, dreaming deep,  
Grey-silvery in the vale; a shrine where keep  
Memorial hopes their pale celestial fire:  
Like man's immortal conscience of desire,  
The spirit that watcheth in me ev'n in my sleep.

1906.



# Later Poems

## II

### LA GLOIRE DE VOLTAIRE

#### A DIALOGUE IN VERSE.

A.

*Je donnerais pour revivre à vingt ans  
L'or de Rothschild, la gloire de Voltaire.*

I like that : Béranger in his printems,  
Voltaire and Rothschild : what three graces there  
Foot it together ! But of old Voltaire,  
I'd ask what Béranger found so sublime  
In that man's glory to adorn his rhyme.  
Was it mere fame ?

B.

Nay : for as wide a fame  
Was won by the gold-garnering millionaire,  
Who in the poet's verse might read his name :  
And what is that ? when so much froth and scum  
Float down the stream of Time (as Bacon saith),  
What is that for deliverance from the death ?  
Could any sober man be proud to hold  
A lease of common talk, or die consoled  
For thinking that on lips of fools to come  
He'll live with Pontius Pilate and Tom Thumb ?  
That were more like eternal punishment,  
The true fool's Paradise by all consent.  
Béranger thought to set a crown on merit.

A.

Man's merit ! and to crown it in Voltaire ?  
The modest eye, the gentle, fearless heart,  
The mouth of peace and truth, the angelic spirit !  
Why Arouet was *soufflé* with the leaven,

## *Later Poems*

Of which the little flock was bid beware :  
His very ambition was to play a part ;  
Indifferent whether he did wrong or right,  
So he won credit ; eager to deny  
A lie that failed, by adding lie to lie ;  
Repaying evil unto seven-times-seven ;  
A fount of slander, flattery and spite ;  
Vain, irritable ; true but to his face  
Of mockery and mischievous grimace,  
A monkey of the schools, the saints' despair !

B.

Yet for his voice half Europe stood at pause  
To hear, and when he spoke rang with applause.

A.

Granted he was a wonder of his kind.  
There is a devilish mockery in things  
Which only a born devil can enjoy.  
True banter is of melancholy mind,  
Akin to madness ; thus must Shakespeare toy  
With Hamlet's reason, ere his fine art dare  
Push his relentless humour to the quick ;  
And so his mortal thrusts pierce not the skin.  
But for the superficial bickerings  
That poison life and never seem to prick,  
The reasonable educated grin,  
Truly no wag is equal to Voltaire ,  
His never-dying ripple, wide and light,  
Has nigh the force of Nature : to compare,  
'Tis like the ocean when the sky is bright,  
And the cold north-wind tickles with surprise  
The briny levels of the infinite sea.  
—Shall we conclude his merit was his wit,  
His magic art and versatility ?

## Later Poems

B.

And think of those foredoom'd in Dante's pit,  
Who, sunk at bottom of the loathly slough,  
Made the black mud up-bubble with their sighs;  
And all because they were unkind to Mirth,  
And went with smoky heart and gloomy brow  
The while they lived upon the pleasant earth  
In the sweet air that rallies to the sun,  
And ne'er so much as smiled or gave God thanks:  
Surely a sparkle of the Frenchman's fun  
Had rescued all their souls.

A.

I think I see  
The Deity who in this Heaven abides,  
*Le bon Dieu*, holding both his aching sides,  
With radiant face of Pan, ruddy and hairy:  
Give him his famous whistles and goat-shanks,  
And then present him to Alighieri.

B.

Nay, 'twixt the Frenchman and the Florentine  
I ask no truce, grave Dante weaving well  
His dark-eyed thought into a song divine,  
Drawing high poetry from heaven and hell—  
And him who lightly mockt at all in turn.

A

It follow'd from his mundane thought of art  
That he contemn'd religion: his concern  
Was comfort, taste, and wit: he had no heart  
For man's attempt to build and beautify  
His home in Nature; so he set all by  
That wisdom had evolved with purpose kind;

## Later Poems

Stamped it as folly, or as fraud attacked;  
Never discerning how his callow zest  
Was impiously defiling his own nest;  
Whereas the least philosophy may find  
The truths are the ideas; the sole fact  
Is the long story of man's growing mind.

B.

Upon your thistle now I see my fig—  
Béranger thought of Voltaire as a seer,  
A latter-day John Baptist in a wig;  
A herald of that furious gospel-storm  
Of words and blood, that made the nations fear:  
When sickening France adulterously sinn'd  
With Virtue, and went mad conceiving wind.  
He ranks him with those captains of reform,  
Luther and Calvin; who, whate'er they taught,  
Led folk from superstition to free thought.

A.

They did. But whence or whither led Voltaire?  
The steward with fifty talents given in charge,  
Who spent them ~~on himself and liv'd at leisure~~  
~~His~~ example that the young are led,  
And judgement owes its kindness but to them;       ;  
Nor will I praise, call you me hard or nice,  
One that degraded art, and varnished vice.  
They that praise ill thereby themselves condemn.

B.

Deny him not this laurel, nor to France  
The apostolate of modern tolerance:  
Their Theseus he, who slew the Minotaur,  
The Dragon Persecution, in which war  
He tipp'd the shafts that made the devil bleed

## *Later Poems*

And won a victory that hath overcome  
Many misdoings in a well-done deed;  
And more, I think, the mind of Christ revealing,  
Yea, more of common-sense and human feeling  
Than all the Creeds and Bulls of Christendom.

### A.

Yet was he only one of them that slew :  
The fiend had taken a deadly wound from Bayle;  
And did he 'roar to see his kingdom fail'  
'Neath Robespierre, or raise his head anew?  
Nay, Voltaire's teaching never cured the heart:  
The lack of human feeling blots his art.  
When most his phrase with indignation burns,  
Still to the gallery his face he turns.

### B.

You bear him hard. Men are of common stuff,  
Each hath some fault, and he had faults enough :  
But of all slanderers that ever were  
A virtuous critic is the most unfair.  
In greatness ever is some good to see ;  
~~Nay, 'twixt the Frenchman and the~~  
I ask no truce, grave Dante weaving well  
His dark-eyed thought into a song divine,  
Drawing high poetry from heaven and hell-  
And him who lightly mockt at all in turn.  
Now Voltaire had of Nature a rich ground,  
Two virtues rarely in conjunction found :  
Industry, which no pedant could excel,  
He matched with gaiety inexhaustible ;  
And with heroic courage held these fast,  
As sailors nail their colours to the mast,  
With ruling excellence atoning all.  
Though, for the rest, he still for praise may call ;

## Later Poems

Prudent to gain, as generous to share  
*Le superflu, chose si nécessaire ;*  
To most a rare companion above scorn,  
To not a few a kind, devoted friend  
Through his long battling life, which in the end  
He strove with good works richly to adorn.  
I have admired, and why should I abuse  
A man who can so long and well amuse?

A.

To some Parisian art there's this objection,  
'Tis mediocrity pushed to perfection.

B.

'Judge not,' say I, 'and ye shall not be judged!'

A.

Let me say, 'praise men, if ye would be praised :'  
Let your unwholesome flattery flow ungrudged,  
And with ungrudging measure shall men pour  
Their stifling homage back till ye be crazed,  
And sane men humour you as fools past cure.  
But these wise maxims deal not with the dead,  
'Tis by example that the young are led,  
And judgement owes its kindness but to them;  
Nor will I praise, call you me hard or nice,  
One that degraded art, and varnished vice.  
They that praise ill thereby themselves condemn.

B.

Béranger could not praise.

A.

Few are who can;  
Not he : if ever he assay'd to impart  
A title loftier than his own renown,

## *Later Poems*

Native irreverence defied his art,  
His fingers soil'd the lustre of his crown.  
Here he adored what he was envious of,  
The vogue and dazzling fashion of the man.  
But man's true praise, the poet's praise, is love.

B.

And that, perhaps, was hardly his affair . . .  
Pray, now, what set you talking of Voltaire?

A.

This only, that in weeding out my shelves,  
In fatherly regard for babes upgrown,  
Until they learn to garden for themselves,  
Much as I like to keep my sets entire,  
When I came out to you I had just thrown  
Three of his precious works behind the fire.

### 12

## TO ROBERT BURNS

### AN EPISTLE ON INSTINCT

#### I

THOU art a poet, Robbie Burns,  
Master of words and witty turns,  
Of lilting songs and merry yarns,  
Drinking and kissing :  
There's much in all thy small concerns,  
But more that's missing.

#### 2

The wisdom of thy common sense,  
Thy honest hate of vain pretence,  
Thy love and wide benevolence  
Full often lead thee  
Where feeling is its own defence;  
Yet while I read thee,

## *Later Poems*

3

It seems but chance that all our race  
Trode not the path of thy disgrace,  
And, living freely to embrace  
The moment's pleasure,  
Snatch'd not a kiss of Nature's face  
For all her treasure.

4

The feelings soft, the spirits gay  
Entice on such a flowery way,  
And sovran youth in high heyday  
Hath such a fashion  
To glorify the bragging sway  
Of sensual passion.

5

But rakes! Chance and Fortune blind  
Had not the power :—Eternal Mind  
Led man upon a way design'd,  
By strait selection  
Of pleasurable ways, to find  
Severe perfection.

6

For Nature did not idly spend  
Pleasure : she ruled it should attend  
On every act that doth amend  
Our life's condition :  
'Tis therefore not well-being's end,  
But its fruition.

7

Beasts that inherited delight  
In what promoted health or might,  
Survived their cousins in the fight :  
If some—like Adam—  
Prefer'd the wrong tree to the right,  
The devil had 'em.



## *Later Poems*

### 8

So when man's Reason took the reins,  
She found that she was saved her pains;  
She had but to approve the gains  
    Of agelong inscience,  
And spin it fresh into her brains  
    As moral conscience.

### 9

But Instinct in the beasts that live  
Is of three kinds; (Nature did give  
To man three shakings in her sieve)—  
    The first is Racial,  
The second Self-preservative,  
    The third is Social.

### 10

Without the first no race could be,  
So 'tis the strongest of the three;  
Nay, of such forceful tyranny  
    'Tis hard to attune it,  
Because 'twas never made to agree  
    To serve the unit:

### 11

Art will not picture it, its name  
In common talk is utter shame:  
And yet hath Reason learn'd to tame  
    Its conflagration  
Into a sacramental flame  
    Of consecration.

### 12

Those hundred thousand years, ah me!  
Of budding soul! What slow degree;  
With aim so dim, so true! We see.  
    Now that we know them,  
Our humble cave-folk ancestry,  
    How much we owe them:

## *Later Poems*

13

While with the savage beasts around  
They fought at odds, yet underground  
Their miserable life was sound ;  
    Their loves and quarrels  
Did well th' ideal bases found  
    Of art and morals :

14

One prime distinction, Good and Ill,  
Was all their notion, all their skill ;—  
But Unity stands next to Nil ;—  
    Want of analysis  
Saved them from doubts that wreck the Will  
    With pale paralysis.

15

In vain philosophers dispute  
'Is Good or Pleasure our pursuit?'—  
The fruit likes man, not man the fruit ;  
    The good that likes him,  
The good man's pleasure 'tis to do 't ;  
    That's how it strikes him.

16

Tho' Science hide beneath her feet  
The point where moral reasonings meet,  
The vicious circle is complete ;  
    There is no lodgement  
Save Aristotle's own retreat.  
    The just man's judgement.

17

And if thou wert not that just man,  
Wild Robin, born to crown his plan,  
We shall not for that matter ban  
    Thy petty treason,  
Nor closely thy defection scan  
    From highest Reason.

## *Later Poems*

18

Thou might'st have lived like Robin Hood  
Waylaying Abbots in the wood,  
Doing whate'er thee-seemèd good,  
The law defying,  
And 'mong the people's heroes stood  
Living and dying :

19

Yet better bow than his thou bendest,  
And well the poor man thou befriendest,  
And oftentime an ill amendest ;  
When, if truth touch thee,  
Sharply the arrow home thou sendest ;  
There's none can match thee.

20

So pity it is thou knew'st the teen  
Of sad remorse : the Might-have-been  
Shall not o'ercloud thy merry scene  
With vain repentance,  
Nor forfeit from thy spirit keen  
My friendly sentence.

13

### THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,  
Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,  
One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek :  
It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,  
Imagine fathering my father ; when he, in sonship afore,  
Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictur'd agaze,  
The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

## *Later Poems*

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,  
O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,  
    The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows  
        my going,  
How had I stray'd without thee ! and yet how few will seek  
The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,  
    Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid  
        the weak.

And Thee ! ah what of thee, thou lover of men ? if truly  
A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to speak,  
    In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,  
—Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—  
Ever ready to speak to us, if we will ~~harken~~ *listen* duly, —

    Bright memories of young poetic pleasure  
        In free companionship, the loving stress  
Of all life-beauty lull'd in studious leisure,  
    When every Muse was jocund with excess  
        Of fine delight and tremulous happiness ;

### AN INVITATION TO THE OXFORD PAGEANT, JULY 1907

FAIR lady of learning, playfellow of spring,  
    Who to thy towery hospice in the vale  
Invitest all, with queenly claim to bring  
    Scholars from every land within thy pale ;  
    If aught our pageantry may now avail  
To paint thine antique story to the eye,  
Inspire the scene, and bid thy herald cry  
    Welcome to all, and to all comers hail !

Come hither, then he crieth, and hail to all .  
    Bow each his heart a pilgrim at her shrine,  
Whatever chance hath led you to my call,  
    Ye that love pomp, and ye that seek a sign,



## Later Poems

Patriarchal Nile rears at his watery stair;  
In the broad islands of the Antipodes,  
By Esperanza, or in the coral seas  
Where Buddha's vain pagodas throng the air;

Or where the chivalry of Nipon smote  
The wily Muscovite, intent to creep  
Around the world with half his pride afloat,  
And sent his battle to the soundless deep;  
Or with our pilgrim-kin, and them that reap  
The prairie-corn beyond cold Labrador  
To California and the Alaskan shore,  
Her exiled sons their pious memory keep :

Bright memories of young poetic pleasure  
In free companionship, the loving stress  
Of all life-beauty lull'd in studious leisure,  
When every Muse was jocund with excess  
Of fine delight and tremulous happiness;  
The breath of an indolent unbridled June,  
When delicate thought fell from the dreamy moon:  
But now strange care, sorrow, and grief oppress.

*' Ah! fewer tears shall be,—'tis thus they dream,—  
Ah, fewer, softer tears, when we lie low :*

*On younger brows shall brighter laurel gleam :  
Lovelier and earlier shall the rosebuds blow.'*

For in this hope she nurs'd them, and to know  
That Truth, while men regard a tetter'd page,  
Leaps on the mountains, and from age to age  
Reveals the dayspring's inexhausted glow.

Yet all their joy is mingled with regret:  
As the lone scholar on a neighbouring height,  
Brooding disconsolate with eyelids wet  
Ere o'er the unkind world he took his flight,

## Odes

Look'd down upon her festal lamps at night,  
And while the far call of her warning bell  
Reach't to his heart, sang us his fond farewell,  
Beneath the stars thinking of lost delight;

'Farewell! for whether we be young or old,  
Thou dost remain, but we shall pass away:  
Time shall against himself thy house uphold,  
And build thy sanctuary from decay;  
Children unborn shall be thy pride and stay.  
May Earth protect thee, and thy sons be true;  
And God with heavenly food thy life renew,  
Thy pleasure and thy grace from day to day.'

## 15

### ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION OF

HENRY PURCELL

*Music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, and performed at the  
Leeds Festival and Commemoration Festival in  
London, 1895*

## I

MYRIAD-VOICED Queen, Enchantress of the air,  
Bride of the life of man! With tuneful reed,  
With string and horn and high-adoring quire  
Thy welcome we prepare.  
In silver-speaking mirrors of desire,

## *Odes*

In joyous ravishment of mystery draw thou near,  
With heavenly echo of thoughts, that dreaming lie  
Chain'd in unborn oblivion drear,  
Thy many-hearted grace restore  
Unto our isle our own to be,  
And make again our Graces three.

### II

Turn, O return ! In merry England  
Foster'd thou wert with infant Liberty.  
Her gloried oaks, that stand  
With trembling leaves and giant heart  
Drinking in beauty from the summer moon,  
Her wild-wood once was dear to thee.

There the birds with tiny art  
Earth's immemorial cradle-tune  
Warble at dawn to fern and fawn,  
In the budding thickets making merry ;  
And for their love the primrose faint  
Floods the green shade with youthful scent.

Come, thy jocund spring renew  
By hyacinthine lakes of blue :  
Thy beauty shall enchant the buxom May ;  
And all the summer months shall strew thy way,  
And rose and honeysuckle rear  
Their flowery screens, till under fruit and berry  
The tall brake groweth golden with the year.

### III

Thee fair Poetry oft hath sought,  
Wandering lone in wayward thought,  
On level meads by gliding streams,  
When summer noon is full of dreams :  
And thy loved airs her soul invade,  
Haunting retired the willow shade.



## *Later Poems*

Or in some wallèd orchard nook  
She communes with her ancient book,  
Beneath the branches laden low ;  
While the high sun o'er bosom'd snow  
Smiteth all day the long hill-side  
With ripening cornfields waving wide.

There if thou linger all the year,  
No jar of man can reach thine ear,  
Or sweetly comes, as when the sound  
From hidden villages around,  
Threading the woody knolls, is borne  
Of bells that dong the Sabbath morn

### IV

#### I

The sea with melancholy war  
Moateth about our castled shore ;  
His world-wide elemental moan  
Girdeth our lives with tragic zone.

He, ere men dared his watery path,  
Fenced them aloof in wrath ;  
Their jealous brotherhoods  
Sund'ring with bitter floods :  
Till science grew and skill,  
And their adventurous will  
Challenged his boundaries, and went free  
To know the round world, and the sea  
From midday night to midnight sun  
Binding all nations into one.

#### 2

Yet shall his storm and mastering wave  
Assure the empire to the brave ;

## *Odes*

And to his billowy bass belongs  
The music of our patriot songs,  
When to the wind his ridges go  
In furious following, careering a-row,  
Lasht with hail and withering snow :  
And ever undaunted hearts outide  
His rushing waters wide.

### 3

But when the winds fatigued or fled  
Have left the drooping barks unsped,  
And nothing stirs his idle plain  
Save fire-breathed ships with silvery train,  
While lovingly his waves he layeth,  
And his slow heart in passion swells  
To the pale moon in heav'n that strayeth,  
And all his mighty music deep  
Whispers among the heaped shells,  
Or in dark caverns lies asleep ;—  
Then dreams of Peace invite,  
Haunting our shore with kisses light :  
Nay—even Love's Paphian Queen hath come  
Out of her long retirèd home  
To show again her beauty bright ;  
And twice or thrice in sight hath play'd  
Of a young lover unaffray'd,  
And all his verse immortal made.

### V

#### I

Love to Love calleth,  
Love unto Love replieth :  
From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,  
Over the dawning and darkening lands  
Love cometh to Love.

## *Later Poems*

To the pangs of desire ;  
To the heart by courage and might  
Escaped from hell,  
From the torment of raging fire,  
From the sighs of the drowning main,  
From shipwreck of fear and pain,  
From the terror of night.

### 2

All mankind by Love shall be banded  
To combat Evil, the many-handed :  
For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth,  
The airy fancy he heedeth,  
He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,  
In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,  
The sovran sun that knows not the night ;  
He loveth the beauty of earth,  
And the sweet birds' mirth ;  
And out of his heart there falleth  
A melody-making river  
Of passion, that runneth ever  
To the ends of the earth and crieth,  
That yearneth and calleth ;  
And Love from the heart of man  
To the heart of man replieth :  
On the wings of desire  
Love cometh to Love.

## VI

### I

To me, to me, fair hearted Goddess, come,  
To Sorrow come,  
Where by the grave I linger dumb ;  
With sorrow bow thine head,  
For all my beauty is dead,

## Odes

Leave Freedom's vaunt and playful thought awhile,  
Come with thine unimpassioned smile  
Of heavenly peace. and with thy fourfold choir  
Of fair uncloying harmony  
Unveil the palaces where man's desire  
Keepeth celestial solemnity.

### 2

Lament, fair hearted queen, lament with me :  
For when thy seer died no song was sung,  
Nor for our heroes fal'n by land or sea  
Hath honour found a tongue :  
Nor aught of beauty for their tomb can frame  
Worthy their noble name.  
Let Mirth go bare : make mute thy dancing string :  
With thy majestic consolation  
Sweeten our suffering.  
Speak thou my woe ; that from her pain  
My spirit arise to see again  
The With deathless flames.

The

The

The

And

### IX

for me the gates of delight,  
ates of the garden of man's desire ;

### DIRGE

Man born of desire  
Cometh out of the night,  
A wandering spark of fire,  
A lonely word of eternal thought  
Echoing in chance and forgot.

### I

He seeth the sun,  
He calleth the stars by name,

## *Later Poems*

He saluteth the flowers.—  
Wonders of land and sea,  
The mountain towers  
Of ice and air  
He seeth, and calleth them fair :  
Then he hideth his face ;—  
Whence he came to pass away  
Where all is forgot,  
Unmade—lost for aye  
With the things that are not.

### 2

He striveth to know,  
To unravel the Mind  
That veileth in horror :  
He wills to adore.  
In wisdom he walketh  
And loveth his kind ;  
His labouring breath  
Of passion, that runneth ever  
To the ends of the earth and crieth,  
That yearneth and calleth ;  
And Love from the heart of man  
To the heart of man replieth :  
On the wings of desire

### 3

He dreameth of beauty,  
He seeks to create  
Fairer and fairer  
To vanquish his Fate ;  
No hindrance he—  
No curse will brook,  
He maketh a law  
No ill shall be :

## *Odes*

Then he hideth his face ;—  
Whence he came to pass away  
Where all is forgot,  
Unmade—lost for aye  
With the things that are not.

### VIII

Rejoice, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,  
Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,  
And that your names, remember'd day and night,  
Live on the lips of those who love you well.

'Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Hell  
Each with the special grace of your delight ;  
Ye are the world's creators, and by might  
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names  
Behind the sun ye climb  
To light the glooms of Time  
With deathless flames.

### IX

Open for me the gates of delight,  
The gates of the garden of man's desire ;  
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire  
Have planted the trees of life.—  
Their branches in beauty are spread,  
Their fruit divine  
To the nations is given for bread,  
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,  
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams.  
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,  
The sea the trust of his streams:

## *Later Poems*

And the rapture of woodland spring  
Is stay'd in its flying;  
And Death cannot sting  
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine  
Their aching beams in colours fine;  
Pain and woe forgo their might.  
After darkness thy leaping sight,  
After dumbness thy dancing sound,  
After fainting thy heavenly flight,  
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:  
O enter the garden of thy delight,  
Thy solace is found.

### X

To us, O Queen of sinless grace,  
Now at our prayer unveil thy face:  
Awake again thy beauty free;  
Return and make our Graces three.  
And with our thronging strength to the ends of the earth  
Thy myriad-voicèd loveliness go forth,  
To lead o'er all the world's wide ways  
God's everlasting praise,  
And every heart inspire  
With the joy of man in the beauty of Love's desire.

# Odes

16

## A HYMN OF NATURE

AN ODE WRITTEN FOR MUSIC

*The music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at  
the Gloucester Festival, 1898*

### I

POWER eternal, power unknown, uncreate :  
Force of force, fate of fate.

Beauty and light are thy seeing,  
Wisdom and right thy decreeing,  
Life of life is thy being.

In the smile of thine infinite starry gleam,  
Without beginning or end,  
Measure or number,  
Beyond time and space,  
Without foe or friend,  
In the void of thy formless embrace,  
All things pass as a dream  
Of thine unbroken slumber.

### II

Gloom and the night are thine:  
On the face of thy mirror darkness and terror,  
The smoke of thy blood, the frost of thy breath.

In silence and woful awe  
Thy harrying angels of death  
Destroy whate'er thou makest—  
Makest, destroyest, destroyest and makest.  
Thy gems of life thou dost squander,



## *Later Poems*

Their virginal beauty givest to plunder,  
Doomest to uttermost regions of age-long ice  
    To starve and expire:  
    Consumest with glance of fire,  
    Or back to confusion shakest  
With earthquake, elemental storm and thunder.

### III

In ways of beauty and peace  
Fair desire, companion of man,  
Leadeth the children of earth.

As when the storm doth cease,  
The loving sun the clouds dispelleth,  
And woodland walks are sweet in spring;  
    The birds they merrily sing  
    And every flower-bud swelleth.  
Or where the heav'ns o'erspan  
    The lonely downs  
    When summer is high:  
    Below their breezy crowns  
    And grassy steep  
Spreadeth the infinite smile of the sunlit sea;  
    Whereon the white ships swim,  
    And steal to havens far  
    Across the horizon dim,  
Or lie becalm'd upon the windless deep,  
    Like thoughts of beauty and peace,  
    When the storm doth cease,  
And fair desire, companion of man,  
    Leadeth the children of earth.

### IV

Man, born to toil, in his labour rejoiceth;  
His voice is heard in the morn:

## *Odes*

He armeth his hand and sallieth forth  
To engage with the generous teeming earth,  
And drinks from the rocky rills  
The laughter of life.

Or else, in crowded cities gathering close,  
He traffics morn and eve  
In thronging market-halls;  
Or within echoing walls  
Of busy arsenals

Weldeth the stubborn iron to engines vast;  
Or tends the thousand looms  
Where, with black smoke o'ercast,  
The land mourns in deep glooms.

Life is toil, and life is good:  
There in loving brotherhood  
Beateth the nation's heart of fire.

Strife! Strife! The strife is strong!  
There battle thought and voice, and spirits conspire  
In joyous dance around the tree of life,  
And from the ringing choir  
Riseth the praise of God from hearts in tuneful song.

## V

Hark! What spirit doth entreat  
The love-obedient air?  
All the pomp of his delight  
Revels on the ravisht night,  
Wandering wilful, soaring fair:  
There! 'Tis there, 'tis there.  
Like a flower of primal fire  
Late redeem'd by man's desire.

Away, on wings away  
My spirit far hath flown,

## *Later Poems*

To a land of love and peace,  
Of beauty unknown.  
The world that earth-born man,  
By evil undismay'd,  
Out of the breath of God  
Hath for his heaven made.

Where all his dreams soe'er  
Of holy things and fair  
In splendour are upgrown,  
Which thro' the toilsome years  
Martyrs and faithful seers  
And poets with holy tears  
Of hope have sown.

There, beyond power of ill,  
In joy and blessing crown'd,  
Christ with His lamp of truth  
Sitteth upon the hill  
Of everlasting youth,  
And calls His saints around.

### VI

Sweet compassionate tears  
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,  
Tears of love, the showers wherewith  
The eternal morn is bright:  
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.  
With tears my eyes are wet,  
Tears not of vain regret,  
Tears of no lost delight,  
Dews of the heav'nly spheres  
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,  
Sweet compassionate tears

# Odes

## VII

Gird on thy sword, O man, thy strength endue,  
In fair desire thine earth-born joy renew.  
Live thou thy life beneath the making sun  
Till Beauty, Truth, and Love in thee are one.

Thro' thousand ages hath thy childhood run:  
On timeless ruin hath thy glory been:  
From the forgotten night of loves fordone  
Thou risest in the dawn of hopes unseen.

Higher and higher shall thy thoughts aspire,  
Unto the stars of heaven, and pass away,  
And earth renew the buds of thy desire  
In fleeting blooms of everlasting day.

### PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

*Ep. I. Daniel Press. 1903.*

„ *II. Monthly Review. July, 1903, with  
an abstract of Stone's Prosody, as*

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Sitteth upon the hill  
Of everlasting youth,  
And calls His saints around.

# POEMS

IN

## CLASSICAL PROSODY



### PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

- Ep. I. Daniel Press. 1903.*  
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an abstract of Stone's Prosody, as  
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by 'later observations & modifica-  
tions'.*

THESE experiments in quantitative verse were made in fulfilment of a promise to William Johnson Stone that I would some day test his theory. His premature death converted my consent into a serious obligation. This personal explanation is due to myself for two reasons: because I might otherwise appear firstly as an advocate of the system, secondly as responsible for Stone's determination of the lengths of English syllables. Before writing quantitative verse it is necessary to learn to *think* in quantities. This is no light task, and a beginner requires fixed rules. Except for a few minor details, which I had disputed with Mr. Stone, I was bound to take his rules as he had elaborated them; and it was not until I had made some progress and could think fairly well in his prosody that I seriously criticized it. The two chief errors that I find in it are that he relied too much on the quality of a vowel in determining its syllabic length, and that he regarded the *h* as *always* consonantal in quality. His valuation of the *er* sound is doubtful, but defensible and convenient, and I have never discarded it. My earlier experiments contain therefore a good many 'false quantities', and these, where they could not be very easily (though *inconsistently*) amended, I have left, and marked most of them in the text: a few false quantities do not make a poem less readable. Thus a long mark over a syllable means that Stone reckoned it as long, and that the verse requires it to be so pronounced, but that I regard it as short, or at least as *doubtful*. For example on p. 414 *Rūin* is thus written. Of all accented long vowels in 'open' position the long *u* seems perhaps to retain its quantity best, but there is evidence that Tennyson held it to be shortened, and I do not know whether it might be an exception or go with theory, piety, poetry, &c. Again, where a final syllable should be lengthened or not shortened by position, but lacks its consonantal support, I have put a *˘* in the gap: these weak places are chiefly due to my accepting Stone's unchanging valuation of *h*. My emancipation from Stone's rules was gradual, so that I have not been able to distinguish definitely my earlier experiments from the later, in which the quantities are such as I have now come to approve of: but my line-for-line paraphrase of Virgil is such a later experiment. It was accompanied in the *New Quarterly* by a long examination of the Virgilian hexameter, to which I would refer any one who is interested in the subject. In these English hexameters I have used and advocate the use of Miltonic elision. The mark *˘* in the text shows where I have purposely allowed a short syllable to sustain a long place. Though the difficulty of adapting our English syllables to the Greek rules is very great, and even deterrent—for I cannot pretend to have attained to an absolutely consistent scheme—yet the experiments that I have made reveal a vast unexplored field of delicate and expressive rhythms hitherto unknown in our poetry: and this amply rewarded me for my friendly undertaking.

## EPISTLE I

TO L. M.

## WINTRY DELIGHTS

Now in wintry delights, and long fireside meditation,  
 'Twixt studies and routine paying due court to the Muses,  
 My solace in solitude, when broken roads barricade me  
 Mudbound, unvisited for months with my merry children,  
 Grateful t'ward Providence, and heeding a slander against me  
 Less than a rheum, think of me to-day, dear Lionel, and take  
 This letter as some account of Will Stone's versification.

We, whose first memories reach half of a century backward,  
 May praise our fortune to have outliv'd so many dangers,—  
 Faultiness of Nature's unruly machinery or man's— ; 10  
 For, once born, whatever 'tis worth, LIFE is to be held to,  
 Its mere persistence esteem'd as rēal attainment,  
 Its crown of silver reverenc'd as one promise of youth  
 Fruiting, of existence one needful purpose accomplish'd:  
 And 'twere worth the living, howe'er unkindly bereft of  
 Those joys and comforts, throu' which we chiefly regard it:  
 Nay,—set aside the pleasant unhinder'd order of our life,  
 Our happy enchantments of Fortune, easy surroundings,  
 Courteous acquaintance, dwelling in fair homes, the delight of  
 Long-plann'd excursions, the romance of journeying in lands  
 Historic, of sēeing their glory, the famous adornments 21  
 Giv'n to memorial Earth by man, decorator of all-time,  
 (—As wē saw with virginal eyes travelling to behold them,—)  
 Her gorgeous palaces, her tow'rs and stately cathedrals ;  
 Where the turrets and domes of pictured Tuscany slumber,



## Poems in

Or the havoc'd splendours of Rome imperial, or where  
Glare the fretted minarets and mosks of trespassing Islam,  
And old Nilus, amid the mummied suzerainty of Egypt,  
Glideth, a godly presence, consciously regardless of all things,  
Save his unending toil and eternal recollections :— 30

Set these out of account, and with them too put away ART,  
Those ravishings of mind, those sensuous intelligences,  
By whose grace the elect enjoy their sacred aloofness  
From Life's meagre affairs, in beauty's regenerate youth  
Reading immortality's sublime revelation, adoring  
Their own heav'nly desire ; nor alone in worship assist they,  
But take, call'd of God, part and pleasure in cr  ation  
Of that beauty, the first of His first purposes extoll'd :—

Yea, set aside with these all NATURE's beauty, the wildwood's  
Flow'ry domain, the flushing, softcrowding loveliness of  
Spring, 40

Lazy Summer's burning dial, the serenely solemn spells  
Of Sibylline Autumn, with gay-wing'd Plenty departing ;  
All fair change, whether of seasons or bright recurrent day,  
Morning or eve ; the divine night's wonderous empyrean ;  
High noon's melting azure, his thin cloud-country, the  
landscape

Mountainous or maritime, blue calms of midsummer Ocean,  
Broad corn-grown champaign goldwaving in invisible wind,  
Wide-water'd pasture, with shade of whispering aspen ;  
All whereby Nature winneth our love, fondly appearing  
As to caress her children, or all that in exaltation 50  
Lifteth aloft our hearts to an unseen glory beyond her :—

Put these out of account ; yea, more I say, banish also  
From the credit sum of enjoyment those simple AFFECTIONS,  
Whose common exercise informs our natural instinct ;  
That, set in our animal flesh-fabric, of our very lifeblood  
Draw their subsistence, and even in ungenerous hearts

## *Classical Prosody*

Root, like plants in stony deserts and 'neath pitiless snows.  
Yea, put away all LOVE, the blessings and pieties of home,  
All delicate heart-bonds, vital tendernesses untold,  
Joys that fear to be named, feelings too holy to gaze on ; 60  
And with his inviolate peace-triumph his passionate war  
Be forgone, his mighty desire, thrilling ecstasies, ardours  
Of mystic reverence, his fierce flame-eager emotions,  
Idoltrous service, blind faith and ritual of fire.

If from us all these things were taken away, (that is all art  
And all beauty whate'er, and all love's varied affection,)  
Yet would enough subsist in other concerns to suffice us,  
And feed intelligence, and make life's justification.  
What this is, if you should ask me, beyond or above the  
rejoicing

In vegetant or brute existence, answer is easy; 70  
'Tis the reflective effort of mind that, conscious of itself,  
Fares forth exploring nature for principle and cause,  
Keenly with all the cunning pleasure and instinct of a hunter,  
Who, in craft fashioning weapon and sly snare, tracketh after  
His prey flying afield, and that which his arm killeth eateth.

History and SCIENCE our playthings are : what an untold  
Wealth of inexhaustive treasure is stored up for amusement !  
Shall the amass'd Earth-structure appeal to me less than in  
early

Childhood an old fives-ball, whose wraps I wondering  
unwound,

Untwining the ravel'd worsted, that mere rubbish and waste  
Of leather and shavings had bound and moulded elastic 81  
Into a perfect sphere ? Shall not the celestial earth-ball  
Equally entertain a mature enquiry, reward our  
Examination of its contexture, conglomerated  
Of layer'd débris, the erosion of infinite ages ?  
Tho' I lack the wizard Darwin's scientific insight  
On the barren sea-beaches of East Patagonia gazing,

## Poems in

I must wond'ring attend, nay learn myself to decipher  
Time's rich hieroglyph, with vast elemental pencil  
Scor'd upon Earth's rocky crust,—minute shells slowly  
collecting 90

Press'd to a stone, uprais'd to a mountain, again to a fine sand  
Worn, burying the remains of an alien organic epoch,  
In the flat accretions of new sedimentary strata;  
All to be crush'd, crumpled, confused, contorted, abandon'd,  
Broke, as a child's puzzle is, to be recompos'd with attention;  
Nature's history-book, which shē hath torn as asham'd of;  
And lest those pictures on her fragmentary pages  
Should too lightly reveal frustrate Antiquity, hath laid  
Rūin upon rūin, revolution upon revolution :  
Yet no single atom, no least insignificant grain 100  
But, having order alike of fate, and faulty disorder,  
Holds a record of Time, very vestiges of the Creation ;  
Which who will not attend scorns blindly the only com-  
mandments  
By God's finger of old inscribed on table of earth-stone.

This for me wer' enough : yet confin'd Gēology's field  
Counts not in all Science more than the planet to the Cosmos;  
Where our central Sun, almighty material author,  
And sustainer, appears as a half-consumed vanishing spark,  
Bearing along with it, entangled in immensity's onward  
Spiral eddies, the blacken'd dust-motes whirl'd off from  
around it. 110

But tho' man's microscopical functions measure all things  
By his small footprints, finger-spans and ticking of clocks,  
And thereby conceive the immense—such multiple extent  
As to defy Idēas of imperative cerebration,—  
None the less observing, measuring, patiently recording,  
Hē mappeth out the utter wilderness of unlimited space;  
Carefully weigheth a weight to the sun, reckoneth for it its  
path

Of trackless travelling, the precise momentary places

## Classical Prosody

Of the planets and their satellites, their annual orbits,  
Times, perturbations of times, and orbit of orbit. 120

What was Alexander's subduing of Asia, or that  
Sheep-worry of Europe, when pigmy Napoleon enter'd  
Her sovereign chambers, and her kings with terror eclips'd?  
His footsore soldiers inciting across the ravag'd plains,  
Thro' bloody fields of death tramping to an ugly disaster?  
Shows any crown, set above the promise (so rudely accom-  
plisht)

Of their fair godlike young faces, a glory to compare  
With the immortal olive that circles bold Galileo's  
Brows, the laurel'd halo of Newton's unwithering fame? 129  
Or what a child's surmise, how trifling a journey Columbus  
Adventur'd, to a land like that which he sail'd from arriving,  
If compar'd to Bessel's magic divination, awarding  
Magnificent Sirius his dark and invisible bride;  
Or when Adams by Cam, (more nearly Leverrier in France,)  
From the minutely measur'd vacillation of Uranus, augur'd  
Where his mighty brother Neptune went wandering unnamed,  
And thro' those thousand-million league-darknesses of space  
Drew him slowly whene'er he pass'd, and slowly released  
him!

*Nil admirari!* 'Tis surely a most shabby thinker 139  
Who, looking on Nature, finds not the reflection appalling.

And if these wonders we must with wonder abandon,  
Astronomy's Cosmos, the Immense, and those physical laws  
That link mind to matter, laws mutual in revelation,  
Which measure and analyse Nature's primordial orgasm,  
Lifegiving omnipotential LIGHT, its speed to determine,  
Untwist its rainbow of various earthcoloring rays,  
Counting strictly to each its own millionth-millimetred  
Wave-length, and mapping out on fray'd diffraction of ether  
All the adust elements and furnaced alchemy of heav'n;  
Laws which atone the disorder of infinit observation 150  
With tyrannous numbers and abstract theory, closing

## Poems in

Protean Nature with nets of principle exact;  
Her metamorphoses transmuting by correlation,  
All heat, all chemical concourse or electrical action,  
All force and all motion of all matter, or subtle or gross :—

If we these wonders, I say, with wonder abandon,  
Nor can for mental heaviness their high study pursue,  
Yet no story of adventures or fabulous exploit  
Of famous'd heroes hath so rōmantic a discourse,  
As these growing annals of long heav'n-scaling achievement  
And far discoveries, which he who'dly neglecteth 161  
Is but a boor as truly ridiculous as the village clown,  
In whose thought the pleasant sun-ball performeth a circuit  
Daily above mother earth, and resteth nightly beneath her.

Nor will a man, whose mind respects its own operations,  
Lightly resign himself to remain in darkness uninform'd,  
While any true science of fact lies easy within reach  
Concerning Nature's ēternal essential object,  
Self-matter, embodying substratum of ev'ry relation  
Both of Time and Space, at once the machinery and stuff  
Of those Idēas ; carrier, giver, only receiver 171  
Of such perceptions as arise in sensible organs.

Now whether each element is a cōherency of equal  
Strictly symmetric atoms, or among themselves the atoms are  
Like animals in a herd, having each an identity distinct,  
—So that atoms of gold compar'd with sulphur or iron  
Are but as ancient Greeks compar'd with Chinamen and  
Turks ;—

Nor whether all elements are untransmutable offspring  
From one kind or more thro' endless eternity changing,  
Or whether invisibles claim rightly the name of immortals,  
I make no'enquiry ; matter minutely divided 181  
Showing a like paradox, with ever-continuous extent,  
And, as Adam, the atom will pose as a naked assumption :—  
But since all the knowledge which man was born to attain to  
Hath these only channels, (which must limit and qualify it,)

## *Classical Prosody*

We shall con the grammar, the material alphabet of life.  
Yea, ev'n more from error to preserve our inquisitive mind,  
Than to secure well-bēing against adversity and ill.  
Surely if all is a flux, 'tis well to look into the flūd,  
Inspect and question the apparent, shifty behaviour, 190  
Wherein lurketh alone our witness of all physical law,  
As we read the habits unchanging of invisible things,  
Their timeless chronicles, the unintelligent ethic of dust:  
In which dense labyrinth he who was guiding avised me,  
With caution saying 'Were this globe's area of land  
'Wholly cover'd from sight, pack'd close to the watery  
    margins  
'With mere empty vessels, I could myself put in each one  
'Some different substance, and write its formula thereon.'

Thus would speak the chemist ; and Nature's superabun-  
    dance,  
Her vast infinitude of waste vāriety untold, 200  
As✓her immense extent and inconceivable object,  
Squandering activities throughout ēternity, dwarfeth  
Man's little aim and hour, his doubtful fancy : what are we?  
Our petty selfseekings, our speedily passing affections?  
Life having existed so extravagantly before us;  
Earth bearing so slight a regard or care for us ; and all  
After us unconcern'd to remain, strange, beautiful as now.  
May not an idle echo✓of an antique pōetry haunt me,  
'Friendship is all feigning, yea✓all loving is folly only' ?  
—Yet doth not very mention of antique pōetry and love 210  
Quickly recall to better motions my dispirited faith?  
And I see man's discontent as witness asserting  
His moral idēal, that, born of Nature, is heir to  
Her children's titles, which nought may cancel or impugn;  
Not wer' of all her works man least, but ranking among them  
Highly or ev'n as best, he wrongs himself to imagine  
His soul foe to her aim, or from✓her sanction an outlaw.

## Poems in

Nay, but just as man should appear more fully accordant  
With things not himself, would they rank with him as equals:  
Judging other creatures he sets them wholly beneath him;  
His disquiet among manifold and alien objects                    221  
Being sure evidence, the effect of an understanding,  
And perception allow'd by Nature solely to himself.

Highly then is to be prais'd the resourceful wisdom of  
our time,  
That spunged out the written science and theories of life,  
And, laying foundation of its knowledge in physical law,  
Gave it preëminence o'er all enquiry, erecting  
Superstructive of all, bringing ev'ry research to the object,  
Boldly a new science of MAN, from dreamy scholastic  
Imprisoning set free, and inveterate divination,                    230  
Into the light of truth, to the touch of history and fact.

Since 'the proper study of mankind is man',—nor afore-  
time  
Was the proverb esteem'd as a truism less than it is now,—  
'Tis strange that the method lay out of sight unaccomplisht,  
And that we, so late to arrive, should first set a value  
On the delusive efforts of human babyhood; and so  
Witnessing impatiently the rear of their disappearance,  
Upgathering the relics and vestiges of primitive man,  
Should ratify instinct for science, look to the darkness  
For light, find a knowledge where 'twas most groping or un-  
known:                    240

While civilization's advances mutely regarding  
Talk we of old scapegoats, discuss bloodrites, immolations,  
Worship of ancestors; explain complexities involved  
Of tribal marriages, derivation of early religions,  
Priestly taboos, totems, archaic mysteries of trees,  
All the devils and dreams abhorr'd of barbarous ages.

And 'tis a far escape from wires, wheels and penny papers  
And the worried congestion of our Victorian era,

## Classical Prosody

Whose many inventions of world-wide luxury have changed  
Life's very face :—but enough wē hear of progress, enough  
have 250

Our conscious science and comforts trumpeted ; altho'  
Hardly can I, who so many years eagerly frequented  
Bartholomew's fountain, not speak of things to awaken  
Kind old HIPPOCRATES, howe'er hē slumbereth, entomb'd  
'Neath the shatter'd winejars and rüined factories of Cos,  
Or where hē wander'd in Thessalian Larissa :  
For when his doctrine, which Rome had wisely adopted,  
Sank lost with the treasures of her deep-foundering empire,  
No art or science grew so contemptible, order'd 259  
So by mere folly, windy caprice, superstition and chance,  
As boastful MEDICINE, with humours fit for a madhouse,  
Save when some Sydenham, like Samson among the Philis-  
tines,

Strode bond-bursting along with a smile of genial instinct.  
Nor when here and there some ray, in darkness arising,  
Hopefully seem'd to herald the coming dawn, (as when a  
Laennec

Or Jenner invented his meed of worthy remembrance,)  
Did one mind foresee, one seer foretell the appearance  
Of that unexpected daylight that arose upon our time.

Who dream'd that living air poison'd our SURGERY, coating  
All our sheeny weapons with germs of an invisible death, 270  
Till he saw the sterile steel work with immunity, and save  
Quickly as its warring scimitars of victory had slain ?  
Saw what school-tradition for nature's kind method admir'd,  
—In those lifedrainning slow cures and bedridden agues,—  
Forgotten, or condemn'd as want of care in a surgeon ?

Tho' MEDICINE makes not so plain an appeal to the vulgar,  
Yet she lags not a whit : her pregnant theory touches  
Deeper discoveries, her more complete revolution  
Gives promise of wider benefits in larger abundance.

Where she nam'd the disease she now separates the  
bacillus; 280



## Poems in

Sets the atoms of offence, those blind and sickly blood-eaters,  
'Neath lens and daylight, forcing their foul propagations,  
Which had ever prosper'd in dark impunity unguessed,  
Now to behave in sight, deliver their poisonous extract  
And their strange self-brew'd, self-slaying juice to be handled,  
Experimented upon, set aside and stor'd to oppose them.

So novel and obscure a research, such hard revelations  
Of Nature's cabinet,—tho' with fact amply accordant,  
And by hypothesis much dark difficulty resolving,  
Are not quickly receiv'd nor approv'd, and sensitive idlers,  
Venturing in the profound terrible penetralia of life, 291  
Are shock'd by a method that shuns not contamination  
With cruel Nature's most secret processes unmaskt.  
And yet in all mankind's disappointed history, now first  
Have his scouts push'd surely within his foul enemies' lines,  
And his sharpshooters descried their insidious foe,  
Those swarming parasites, that barely within the detection  
Of manifold search-light, have bred, swimming unsuspected  
Thro' man's brain and limbs, slaying with loathly pollution  
His beauty's children, his sweet scions of affection, 300  
In feverous torment and tears, his home desolating  
Of their fair innocence, breaking his proud passionate heart,  
And his kindly belief in God's good justice arraigning.

With what wildly directed attack, what an armory illjudged,  
Has he, (alas, poor man,) with what cumbrous machination  
Sought to defend himself from their Lilliputian onslaught;  
Aye discharging around him, in obscure night, at a venture,  
Ev'ry missile which his despair confus'dly imagin'd;  
His simples, compounds, specifics, chemical therapeutics,  
Juice of plants, whatever was nam'd in lordly Salerno's 310  
Herbaries and gardens, vipers, snails, all animal filth,  
Incredible quackeries, the pretentious jugglery of knaves,  
Green electricities, saints' bones and priestly anointings.  
Fools! that oppose his one scientific intelligent hope!  
Grant us an hundred years, and man shall hold in abeyance  
These foul distempers, and with this world's benefactors

## *Classical Prosody*

Shall PASTEUR obtain the reward of saintly devotion,  
His crown hēroic, who fought not destiny in vain.

'Tis success that attracts : 'twas therefore so many workers  
Ran pellmell to the schools of Nature in our generation, 320  
While other employments have lack'd their genius and pined.  
Our fathers' likings wē thought semibarbarous, our art  
Self-consciously sickens in qualms of an æsthetic aura,  
Noisily in the shallows splashing and disporting uninspir'd.  
Our famed vulgarities whether in speech, taste or amusement,  
Are not amended: Is it foolish, hoping for a rescue,  
First to appeal to the strong, for health to the healthy  
amongst us?

—For the Sophists' doctrine that GRACE is d̄ying of old age  
I hold in derision, their inkpot thēories of man,  
Of his cradle of art, his deathbed of algebra ;—and see 330  
How Science has wrought, since we went idling at Eton,  
One thing above surmise :—An' if I may dare to remind you  
How Vergil praises your lov'd Lucretius, (of whom  
My matter and metre<sup>v</sup>have set you thinking, as I fear,)  
In that glory which ends 'et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari':  
Sounded not most empty to us such boast of a pagan,  
Strangely to us tutor'd to believe, with faith mediæval,  
Torture everlasting to be justly the portion of all souls,  
Nor but by the elects' secret prēdestiny escaped? 340  
If you think to reply,—making this question in answer,—  
'Did the belief disturb for a moment our pleasure in life?'  
No.—And men gather in harvest on slopes of an active  
Volcano: natheless the terror's ěnormity was there ;  
Now 'tis away : Scīence has pierced man's cloudy common-  
sense,

Dow'rd his homely vision with more expansive an embrace,  
And the rotten foundation of old superstition exposed.  
That trouble of Pascal, those vain paradoxes of Austin,  
Those Semitic parables of Paul, those tomes of Aquinas,

## Poems in

All are thrown to the limbo of antediluvian idols, 350  
Only because we learn mankind's true history, and know  
That not at all from a high perfection sinfully man fell,  
But from baseness arose : We have with sympathy enter'd  
Those dark caves, his joyless abodes, where with ravening  
brutes,

Bear or filthy hyena, he once disputed a shelter :—  
That was his Paradise, his garden of Eden,—abandon'd  
Ages since to the drift and drip, the cementing accretions  
Whence we now separate his bones buried in the stalagma,  
His household makeshifts, his hunting tools, his adornments,  
From the scatter'd skeletons of a lost prehistoric order, 360  
Its mammoth and woolly rhinoceros, the machairodos, and  
beasts

Whose unnamed pastures the immense Atlantic inundates.

In what corner of earth lie not dispersed the familiar  
Flinty relics of his old primitive stone-cutlery ? what child  
Kens not now the design, the adapted structure of each one  
Of those hand-labor'd chert-flakes, whether axe, chisel, or  
knife,

Spearhead, barb of arrow, rough plane or rudely serrate saw ?  
Stones that in our grandsires' time told no sermon, (awaiting  
Indestructible, unnumber'd, on chary attention,)  
From their præadamite pulpits now cry Revelation. 370

Not to a Greek his chanted epic had mortal allurements,  
Conjuring old-world fancies of Ilium and of Olympus,  
As this story to me, this tale primæval of unsung,  
Unwritten, ancestral fate and adversity, this siege  
Of courage and happiness protracted so many thousand  
Thousand years in a slow persistent victory of brain  
And right hand o'er all the venom'd stings, sharpnesses of  
fang

And dread fury whate'er Nature, tirelessly devising,  
Could develop with tooth, claw, tusk, or horn to oppose them.  
See now Herakles, who strangled snakes when an infant 380  
In his cradle alone ; and nought but those petty stonechips

## *Classical Prosody*

For the battle : 'twas wonder above wonders his achievement :  
Yea, and since he thought as a child 'twas natural in<sup>h</sup>him,  
Meeting in existence with purposes antagonistic,  
Circumstances oppos'd to desire, vast activities, which  
Thwarted effort, to assume All-might as spiteful against him.  
Nay, as an artist born, impell'd to devise a religion,—  
So to relate himself idēally with the immortal,—  
This quarrel of reason with what displeas'd his affections  
Was not amiss. The desire and love of beauty possess man :  
Art is of all that beauty the best outwardly presented ; 391  
Truth to the soul is merely the best that mind can imagine.  
No lover eternal will hold to an older opinion  
If but lovelier ideas, with Nature agrēeing,  
Are to his understanding offer'd...But enough : 'tis an unsolv'd  
Mystery.—Yet man dreams to flatter<sup>v</sup>his dēity saying  
'Beautiful is Nature !' rather 'tis various, endless,  
And her efforts fertile in error tho' grand in attainment.  
If wé, while praising<sup>v</sup>her scheme and infinite order,  
Are compell'd to select, our choice condemns the remainder ;  
Nor can wisdom honour those loathly polluting offences, 401  
Whose very names to the Muse are either accursèd or  
unknown.

Nay, if such foul things thou deemest worthy, the fault was  
Making us, O Nature, thy judge and tearful accuser.

Turn our thought for awhile to the symphonies of  
Beethoven,

Or the rever'd preludes of mighty Sebastian ; Is there  
One work of Nature's contrivance beautiful as these ?  
Judg'd by beauty alone man wins, as sensuous artist ;  
And for other qualities, the spirit's differentia, Nature  
Scarce observes them at all : that keen unfaltering insight, 410  
Whereby<sup>v</sup>earthly desire's roaming wildernesses are changed  
Into a garden a-bloom ; its wandering impossible ways  
Into pillar'd avenues, alleys and fair-flow'ry terrac'd walks,  
(Where God talks with man, as once 'twas fancied of Eden ;)  
That transcendental supreme interpreting of sense,

## Poems in

Rendering intelligence passionate with mystery, linking  
Sympathy with grandeur, the reserve of dignity with play;  
Those soul-formalities, the balance held 'twixt the denial  
And the betrayal of intention, whose masteries invite,  
Entice, welcome ever, meet, and with kindliness embrace; 420  
Those guarded floodgates of boundless, lovely resources,  
Whence nothing ill issues, no distraction nor abortion  
Hindering enjoyment, but in easy security flow forth  
Ecstasies of fitness, raptures and harmonies of heav'n.  
Surely before such work of man, so kindly attemper'd,  
Nature must be asham'd, had shē not this ready answer,  
'Fool, and who made thee?'—

I shall not seem a deserter,  
Where in an idle essay my verse to a fancy abandon'd  
Praiseth others: rather while art and beauty delight us,  
While hope, faith and love are warm and lively in our hearts,  
Sweet our earthly desire and dear our human affection, 431  
We may, joyfully despising the pedantries of old age,  
Hold to the time, nor lose the delight of mortal attainment;  
Keenly rejoicing in all that wisdom approves, nor allowing  
Ourselves at the challenge of younger craft to be outsailed;  
But trimming our old canvas in all change of weather and  
wind,  
Freely without fear urge o'erseas our good vessel onward,  
Piloting into the far, unmapp'd futurity.—Farewell.

# *Classical Prosody*

## 2

### EPISTLE II

#### TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

No<sup>v</sup>ethical system, no contemplation or action,  
No reason'd attitude of mind nor principle of faith,  
Neither Sōcratical wisdom nor saintly devotion,  
Buildeth a fortress against heart-ache & compassionate grief,  
Nor responds to desire, nor with true mastery yieldeth  
Easy repose to the mind ; And since all our study endeth  
Emptily in full doubt,—fathoming the divine intention  
In this one thing alone, that, howsoever it affect us,  
'Twas never intended for mortal fancy to compass,—  
I have concluded that from first purposes unknown      10  
None should seek to deduce idēal laws to be liv'd by ;  
And, loving art, am true to the Muse, & pōetry extol :  
Therefore 'twas that afore I prais'd & heartily enjoy'd  
Your human verses, FRASER, when nobody bought them,  
More than again I praise those serious exhortations,  
Wherewith you wu'd amend the degraded people about you.  
Nay tho' like a prophet with heav'n-sent dignity inspir'd,  
With ready conviction and stern example assuring,  
Mightily you proclaim your love-messag' in the assembly,  
Exhibiting panacēas of ancient ill, propagating      20  
Out of a Scotch cerebrum the reforming zeal of a TOLSTOI,  
I listen all unmov'd, as a sceptic among the believers.  
Yet what a charm has an earnest soul, whom sympathy  
    unchecked  
For human suffering has strengthen'd and dedicated  
Bravely to serve his kind, to renounce his natural instinct,  
And liv' apart, indulging in acts of mercy, delighted  
In wisdom's rock-hewn citadel<sup>v</sup>her law to illustrate,  
Embodying the pattern of self-integrity complete.

## Poems in

Yea, what a charm pervades discourse, that loftily reason'd  
Points the narrow pathway throu' this world's ugly disorder;  
How very fair wil appear any gate of cleanliness, open 30  
From the city's tumult, its rank impurity, its dread  
Vulgarity's triumph: Nay sure & bounteous as Truth,  
Beautiful in confusion appeareth Simplicity's way.

—'Simple it is, (yóu say) God is good,—Nature is ample,—  
'Earth yields plenty for all,—and all might share in abundance,

'Were profit and labour but fairly divided among them.

'Scarce any laws are needed in our Utopia but these,—

'No fruitless labour to provide mere useless adornment,

'No money encouraging man's sloth & slavery, no rents 40

'Of titeld landlords, no pamper'd luxury breeding

'Fleshly disease, worst fiend & foe of mind body and soul;

'All should work, and only produce life's only requirements:

'So with days all halfholidays, toil healthfully enjoy'd,

'Each might, throu' leisure hours of amusement pīety and  
peace,

'In the domestic joys & holy community partake.—'

—This wer' a downleveling, my friend; yōū need, to assure  
me,

Fix a limit to the folk; else, as their number is increas't,

Their happiness may dwindle away, & what was at outset

Goal & prize, the provoker of all your wise revolution, 50

Will by subdivision disappear in course of atainment.

When goods are<sup>v</sup>increas'd, mouths are<sup>v</sup>increas'd to devour  
them:

If the famine be reliev'd this season in India, next dearth

Will be a worse. Yōū know how one day Herschel acosted

Súch a philanthropical Save-all, who claimed to acomplish

Some greatest happiness for a greatest number; 'Attend,  
man;

(Saíd-he) Resólve me anon one query: Suppose Adam and  
Eve

First crēated on Earth but twice ten centuries ere Christ,

## *Classical Prosody*

That they gat four children in all, who liv'd, getting also  
Four to the pair : Had thus mankind ever equally increast 60  
By moderate families but doubling in each generation,  
How many souls would now be alive to revise the conun-  
drum

Of greatest happiness ? No<sup>v</sup>answer ? Well, 'tis a long sum.  
Say if on earth such a crowd could stand. No ? Pray then  
imáagine

All earth's land as a plain, & all this company thereon,  
Piled together like peas in a pintpot : How many layers ?  
No guess ? Then how high the column ? How far wu'd it  
extend

Into the sky ?—To the moon ?—Further—To the sun ?—To  
the sun ! Pshaw !

That column of happy men would reach up, as I fathom its  
height,

Million dīameters of Neptune's infinit' orbit.' 70

My<sup>v</sup>objection annoys your kindly philanthropy?—'It  
proves

'Too much.'—Yes nature shows in that scrutiny bankrupt;  
Mere matter in deposit gives out. Yóu wish to determine  
No limit of future polities : your actual object  
Is to relieve suffering, to repeal injustice accruing  
From monied inheritance, which makes a nonentity potent  
For public mischief, who might, if usefully harness'd  
In common employment, have assisted social order.

Why should Law give fifty talents where Nature alloys one ?  
For money is the talent of supreme empery : Gold, Gold 80  
Envieth all, getteth all, absorbeth, mastereth all things :  
It pusheth out & thrusteth away pitilessly the weak ones,  
Those ill-fated, opprest, unfortun'd needy : Beneath them  
Yawns the abyss. Down down they fall, as a stream on a  
mountain,

With ceaseless cataract. None hearkeneth ; only the silent  
Grave, that darkly devours their cry of desperate anguish.  
Spáre me the story ; believe more feel this grief than avow it :



## Poems in

'Tis put aside from thought with death's incurable evil;  
Left for them, that assume mankind as cause, to lament it.  
And what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90  
If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,  
Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,  
Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd  
Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;  
Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers  
Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,  
Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;  
Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy  
Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy roamers;  
Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100  
Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;  
Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds:  
All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,  
Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers,  
Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading  
Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd  
Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning  
With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:  
All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine  
Centēnarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance 110  
Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffing ephemeral insect,  
Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,  
Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:  
Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring,  
'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,  
MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute appa-  
ratus,  
So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:  
What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?  
That the select creatures, who inherit earth's domination,  
Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120  
Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles  
Chanting a brief pæan for victory on the battlefield?

## Classical Prosody

Since that of all their kinds most owe their prosperous estate  
Unto the art, whereby they more successfully destroy'd  
Their weaker brethren, more insatiably devour'd them;  
And all fine qualities, their forms pictorial, admired,  
Their symmetries, their grace, & beauty, the loveliness of  
them,

Were by Murder evolv'd, to 'scape from it or to effect it.

'Surely again (you say) too much is proven, it argues  
'Mere horror & despair; unless persuasion avail us 130  
'That the moral virtues are man's idēa, awaken'd  
'By the spirit's motions; & therefore not to be conceiv'd  
'In Nature's outward & mainly material aspect,  
'As that is understood. You, since you hold that opinion,  
'Run your own ship aground invoking Nature against me.'—

Then withdraw the appeal, my friend, to her active aliance;  
Bē pessimist Nature with a pitchfork manfully expell'd,  
Not to return. Yet *soul in hand*, with brutal alegiance,  
Hunters & warriors *do not forget the comandment*.

See how lively the old animal continueth in them: 140  
Of what trifling account they hold life, yet what a practis'd  
Art pursue to preserve it: if I should rightly define sport  
SLAUGHTER WITH DANGER, what were more serious and brave?  
Their love of air, of strength, of wildness, afford us an inkling  
Of the delight of beasts, with whom they might innocently  
Boast a fellow-feeling, summoning them forth to the combat.  
Nay dream not so quickly to see her ladyship expell'd.  
Those prowling Lions of stony Kabylia, whose roar  
Frights from sleep the huddled herdsmen, soon as the sudden  
night

Falls on Mount Atlas, those grave uxorious outlaws 150  
Wandering in the Somali desert or waste Kalahari,  
Sound a challenge that amid summer-idling London is  
answer'd

Haply in Old Bond Street, where some fashionably attired  
youth

Daintily stands poisoning the weapon foredoom'd to appay them:

## Poems in

Or he mentally sighteth a tiger of India, that low  
Crouches among the river jungles, or hunts desolating  
Grassy Tarâi, 'neath lofty Himâlya, or far southward  
Outacamund, Mysore's residency, the Nilgherry mountains  
By Malabar; yea, and ere-long shall sight him in earnest,  
Stalked as a deer, surprised where hē lay slumbering at noon  
Under a rock full-gorged, or deep in reedy covert hid 160  
By the trackers disturbed: Two grand eyes shall for a moment  
Glare upon either side the muzzle. Woe then to the hunter,  
If hē blench! That fury beclouded in invisible speed  
What marksman could arrest? what mortal abide his arrache-  
ment?

Standing above the immense carcase hē gratefully praiseth  
God for a man-eater so fine, so worthy the slaying.

See him again; 'tis war: one hill-rock strongly defended  
Checks advance, to be stormed at cost of half the assailants.  
Gaily away they go, Highlanders, English, or Irish, 170  
Or swart Ghoorkas against the leaden hail, climbing, ascend-  
ing,

Lost in a smoke, scattering, creeping, here there, ever  
upwards:

Till some change cometh o'er confusion. Who winneth?  
ah! see!

Ours have arrived, and he who led their bravery is there.  
None that heard will ever forget that far-echoing cheer:  
Such heard Nelson, above the crashings & thundering of  
guns:

At Marathon 'twas heard and all time's story remembers.

See him again, when at home visiting his episcopal uncle:  
That good priest contrast with this good captain, assay them:  
Find a common-measure equating their rival emotions; 180  
Ēvaporate the rubbish, the degrading pestiferous fuss  
Of stuck-up importance, the palatial coterie, weigh out  
Then the solids: whose life would claim the award of an  
umpire

For greatest happiness? High-priest or soldier? Adjudge it

## Classical Prosody

By their books : Let a child give sentence. Ev'n as a magnet  
Turns and points to the north, so children's obstinate insight  
Flies to the tale of war, hairbreadth scapes, daring achieve-  
ments.

Discoveries, conquests, the romance of history : these things  
Win them away from play to devour with greedy attention  
Till they long to be men ; while all that clerkly palaver 190  
Tastes like wormwood.—‘ Avast ! (I hear you calling) Avast  
there !

'I forbid the appeal.'—Well, style my humour atrocious ;  
Granted a child cannot understand ; yet see what a huge  
growth

Stands to be extermin'd, ere you can set dibble in ground.  
Nay, more yet; that mighty forest, whose wildness offends  
you,

And silences appal, where earth-life self-suffocating  
Seethes, lavish as sun-life in a red star's fiery corona;  
That waste magnificence, and vain fecundity, breeding  
Giants & parasites embrac'd in flowery tangle,  
Interwoven alive and dead, where one tyrannous tree 200  
Blights desolating around it a swamp of rank vegetation;  
Where Reason yet dreams unawakt, & throu' the solemn day  
Only the monkey chatters, & discordant the parrot screams:  
All this is in man's heart with dateless sympathy worshippt,  
With filial reverence, & awful pieties involv'd;  
While that other picture, your formal fancy, the garden  
Of your stingy promise, must that not quench his imágin'd  
Idéals of beauty, his angel hope of attainment?  
What to him are the level'd borders, the symmetric allot-  
ments.

Where nothing exceedeth, nothing encroacheth, nor assaileth ;  
Where Reason now drudgeth a sad monomaniac, all day 211  
Watering & weeding, digging & diligently manuring  
Her label'd families, starch-makers, nitrogen-extract-  
Purveyors, classified potherbs & empty pretenders  
Of medical virtues ; nay ev'n and *their* little impulse

## Poems in

T'ward liberal fruiting disallow'd by stern regulation;  
So many beans to a pod, with so many pods to a beanstalk;  
Prun'd, pinch'd, economiz'd miserly til' all is abortion,  
Save in such specimens as, but for an extravagant care,  
Had miserably perish'd. What madness works to delude  
you,

220

Bēing a man, that you see not mankind's predilection  
Is for Magnificence, Force, Freedom, Bounty; his inborn  
Love for Beauty, his aim to possess, his pride to devise it:  
And from everlasting his heart is fixt with affections  
Prēengag'd to a few sovranly determinate objects,  
Toys of an ēternal distraction. Beautiful is GOLD,  
Clear as a trumpet-call, stirring where'er it appeareth  
All high pow'rs to battle; with mágisterial ardour  
Glowing among the metals, elemental drops of a fire-god's  
Life-blood of old outpour'd in Chāos: Mágical also 230  
Ev'ry recondite jēwel of Earth, with their seraphim-names,  
RUBY, JACYNTH, EMERALD, AMETHYST, SAPPHIRE; amaran-  
thine

Starry essences, elect emblems of purity, heirlooms  
Of deathless glories, most like to divine imanences.  
Then that heart-gladdening highpriz'd ambrosia, blending  
Their dissolute purples & golds with sparkling aroma,  
That ruddy juice exprest from favour'd vintages, infus'd  
With cosmic laughter, when upon some sécular epact  
Blandly the sun's old heart is stirr'd to a septennial smile,  
Causing strangefortun'd comfort to melancholy mortals: 240  
Friend to the flēsh, if mind be fatigued; rallying to the sound  
mind,

When succour is needed 'gainst fainting weariness of flesh;  
Shall Wine not be belov'd? Or now let Aristotle answer  
What goods are,—Time leaves the scholar's inventory un-  
chang'd;—

All Virtues & Pow'rs, Honour & Pleasure, all that in our life  
Makes us self-sufficient, Friends, Riches, Comeliness, and  
Strength;

## *Classical Prosody*

They that have these things in plenty desire to retain them,  
And win more ; while they that lack are pleas'd to desire  
them.

Nay and since possession will leave the desire unappeas'd,  
Save in mere appetites that vary with our physical state, 250  
Surely delight in goods is an ecstasy rather attendant  
On their mental image, than on experienc'd operation.  
So the shepherd envies the monarch, the monarch the  
shepherd's lot,—

'O what a life were this, How sweet, how lovely !' the  
king cries.

Whence, I say, as a man feels brave who reads of ACHILLES,  
One looking on riches may learn some kindred elation,  
And whatever notions of fortune, luxury, comfort,  
Genius or virtue, are shown to him, only as aspects  
Of possible being, 'tis so much gain to desire them ;  
Learning Magnificence in mean obscurity, tasting 260  
Something of all those goods which Fate outwardly denies  
him.

But say none shall again be king or prosperous or great,—  
Arguing 'all eminence is unequal, unequal is unjust',—  
Should that once come about, then alas for this merry England,  
Sunk in a grey monotone of drudgery, dreamily poring  
O'er her illumin'd page of history, fain to regretful  
Worship of ancestors, with nought now left to delight her,  
Nought to attain, save one nurst hope, one ambition only  
Red Revolution, a wild Reawakening, & a Renaissance.

Impatiently enough you hear me, longing to refute me, 270  
While I in privileg'd pulpit my period expand.  
Who could allow such a list of strange miscellaneous items,  
So-call'd goods, Strength, Riches, Honour, Gold, Genius,  
and Wine ?

Is not Wisdom above Rubies ? more than Coral or Pearl ?  
Yours is a scheme deep-laid on true distinctive assortment,  
Parting use or good from useless or evil asunder ;  
Dismissing accessories, while half my heathenish invoice

## Poems in

Are Vanity's vanities. Well; truly, as old SOLOMON said,  
So they *be*: What is excepted? What scapes his arraignment?  
Is't Pleasure or Wisdom? Nay ask THEOLOGIA: Good-  
works,

280

Saith-she, offend her nostril. If I distinguish, asserting,  
Say, that if I've enjoyed my neighbour's excessive income  
I would hire me a string-quartet not an automaton car,  
You blame equally both our tastes for luxury, indeed  
His shows more of a use. If man's propensity is vain,  
Vulgar, inane, unworthy; 'tis also vain to bewail it:  
Think you to change his skin? 'Twere scale by scale to  
regraft it

With purer traditions; and who shall amend the amenders?  
Nay let *bé* the bubbles, till man grow more solid in mind,  
Condemn not the follies: My neighbour's foolery were worse,  
Sat he agape listening to Mozart, intently desiring 291  
All that time to be rattling along on a furious engine  
In caoutchouc carapace, with a trail of damnable oilstench.  
Yea, blame not the pleasures; they are not enough;  
pleasure only

Makes this life liveable: nor scout that doctrine as unsound:  
Consider if mankind from puling birth to bitter death  
Knew nought but the sorrows, endured unrespite always  
Those agonizing assaults which no flesh wholly can escape;  
Were his hunger a pang like his starvation, allevement  
Thereof a worse torture, like that which full many die with;  
Did love burn his soul as fire his skin; did affections 300  
Rend his will, as Turks rend men with horses asunder;  
Were his labour a breathless effort; his slumber occasion  
For visiting Furies to repair his temple of anguish;  
Were thoughts all mockeries; slow intelligence a deception;  
His mind's far ventures, her voyages into the unseen  
But horror & terrified nightmare; None then had ever heard  
Praise of a Crēator, nor seen any Dēity worshipped.  
'Twas for heav'nly Pleasure that God did first fashion all  
thing,

## Classical Prosody

Nor with other benefit would holy Religion attract us  
Picturing of Paradise. Consult our Lady's Evangel, 310  
Where Saint Luke,—colouring (was it unconsciously, suppose  
you?)

Fact and fable alike,—contrasts a beggar with a rich man,  
And from holding a fool's happiness too greatly in esteem  
Makes pleasure eternal the balance of temporal evil,  
And the reverse; nor shrinks, ascribing thus to the next world  
Vaster inequalities, harsher perversity than this.

*You* have a soul's paradise, its entry the loop of a needle,  
Come hither & prithy tell me what I must do to be saved,  
I, that feeding on Idēals in temperat' estate  
Seem so wealthy to poor Lazarus, so needy to Dives: 320  
What from my heav'n-bound schooner's dispensable outfit  
Has to be cast o'erboard? What see you here that offends  
you?

These myriad volumes, these tons of music :—allow them  
Or disallow? Fiddle and trichord?—Must all be relin-  
quished?

Such toys have not a place in your society; you say  
Nobody shall make them, nor made may justly acquire them.  
Yet, should a plea be alleged for life's most gracious adorn-  
ment,

For contemplative art's last transcendental achievement,  
Grief's almighty solace, frolicking Mirth's Purification,  
For Man's unparagon'd High-pōetess, inseparate Muse 330  
Companion, the belov'd most dearly among her sisters,  
Revivifier of age, fairest instructor of all grace,  
His peacemaker alert with varied sympathy, whose speech  
Not to arede and love is wholly to miss the celestial  
Consolatries, the divine interpreting of physical life,—  
You wince? make exception? allow things musical? admit  
So many faked viols, penny trumpets, and amateurish  
Performers? Nay, nay! stand firm, for concession is vain.  
Music is outmeasurably a barefaced luxury, her plea 339  
Will cover art, (—almost to atone art's vile imitations—);



## Poems in

My Japanese paintings, my fair blue Cheney, Hellenic  
Statues and Caroline silver, my beautiful Aldines,  
Prized more highly because so few, so fondly familiar,  
Need no tongue to defend them against rude hands, that  
assail them

Only because their name is RARITY ; hands insensate,  
Rending away pitilessly the fair embroideries of life,  
That close-clust'ring man, his comfort pared to the outskirts  
Of his discomfort, may share in meanness unenvied.  
But what if I unveil the figure that closely beside you 350  
Half hides his Hell-charred skeleton with mysteries obscene,  
That foul one, that Moloch of all Utopias, ancient  
Poisoner & destroyer-elect of innumerable unborn ?

Know you the story of our hive-bees, the yellow honey-  
makers,  
Whose images from of old have haunted Pöetry, settling  
On the blossoms of man's dream-garden, as on the summer-  
flow'rs,  
Pictures of happy toil, sunny glances, gendering always  
Such sweet thoughts, as be by slumbrous music awaken'd ?  
How all their outward happiness,—that fairy demeanour  
Of busy contentment, singing at their work,—is an inborn 360  
Empty habit, the relics of a time when considerate joy  
Truly possess their tiny bodies ; when golden abundance  
Was not a State-kept hoard ; when feasts were plentiful  
indulg'd

With wine well-fermented, or old-stored spicy metheglin :  
For they died not then miserably within the second moon  
Forgotten, unrespected of all ; but slept many winters,  
Saw many springs, liv'd, lov'd like men, consciously rejoicing  
In Nature's promises, with like hopes and recollections.  
Intelligence had brought them Science, Genius enter'd ;  
Seers and sages arose, great Bees, perfecting among them 370  
Copious inventions, with man's art worthily compared.  
Then was a time when that, which haps not in ages of ages,  
Strangely befel : they stole from Nature's secrecy one key,

## *Classical Prosody*

Found the hidden motive which works to variety of kind ;  
And thus came wondrously possess'd of pow'r to determine  
Their children's qualities, habitudes, yea their specialized  
form

Masculine or feminine to produce, or asexual offspring  
Redow'd and differenced with such alternative organs  
As they chose, to whate'er preferential function adapted,  
Wax-pocket or honey-bag, with an instinct rightly accordant.

We know well the result, but not what causes effected 381  
Their decision to prefer so blindly the race to the unit,  
As to renounce happiness for a problem, a vain abstraction ;  
Making home and kingdom a vast egg-factory, wherein  
Food and life are stor'd up alike, and strictly proportion'd  
In loveless labour with mean anxiety. Wondrous  
Their reason'd motive, their altruistic obedience  
Unto a self-impos'd life-sentence of prison or toil.  
Wonder wisely ! then ask if these ingenious insects,  
(Who made Natur' against her will their activ' accomplice,  
And, methodizing anew her heartless system, averted 391  
From their house the torrent of whelming natural increase,)  
Are blood-guiltless among their own-born progeny : What  
skill

Keeps their peace, or what price buys it? Alack ! 'tis  
murder,

Murder again. No worst Oriental despot, assuring  
'Gainst birthright or faction or envy his ill-gotten empire,  
So decimates his kin, as do these rown-bodied egg-queens  
Surprise competitors, and stab their slumbering infants,  
Into the wax-cradles replunging their double-edged stings.  
Or what a deed of blood some high-day, when the summer  
hath

400

Their clammy cells o'erbrim'd, and already ripening orchards  
And late flow'rs proclaim that starving winter approacheth,  
Nor will again any queen lead forth her swarm, dispeopling  
Their strawbuilt citadel ; then watch how these busy workers  
Cease for awhile from toil ; how crowding upon the devoted

## Poems in

Drones they fall ; those easy fellows gave some provocation ;  
Yet 'tis a foul massacre, cold murder of unsuspecting  
Life-long companions ; and done bloodthirstily :—is not  
Exercise of pow'r a delight ? have you not a doctrine  
That calls duty pleasure ? What an if they make merry, saying  
'Lazy-livers, runagates, evil beasts, greedy devourers, 411  
'Too happy and too long ye've liv'd, unashamed to have  
outliv'd

'Your breeders, feeders, warmers and toiling attendants ;  
'Had-ye ever been worthy a public good to accomplish,  
'Each had nobly perish'd long-ago. Unneeded, obese ones,  
'Impious encumbrance, whose hope of service is over,  
'Who did not, now can not, assist the community, YE DIE !'

My parable may serve. What wisdom man hath attain'd to  
Came to him of Nature's goodwill throu' tardy selection :  
Should her teaching accuse herself and her method impugn,  
I may share with her the reproach of approving as artist 421  
Far other idēals than what seem needful in action.

This difficulty besets our time. If you have an answer,  
Write me it, as you keep your salt in savour ; or if toil  
Grant you an indulgence, here lies fair country, direct then  
Your Sabbath excursion westward, and spend a summer-day  
Preaching among the lilies what you've preached to the  
chimneys.

# Classical Prosody

## 3

### EVENING

FROM W.M. BLAKE<sup>1</sup>

COME, rosy angel, thy coronet donning  
Of starry jēwels, smile upon ev'ry bed,  
And grant what each day-weary mortal,  
Labourer or lover, asketh of thee.

Smile thou on our loves, enveloping the land  
With dusky curtain: consider each blossom  
That timely upcloseth, that opens  
Her treasure of heavy-laden odours.

Now, while the west-wind slumbereth on the lake,  
Silently dost thou with delicate shimmer  
O'erbloom the frowning front of awful  
Night to a glance of unearthly silver.

No hungry wild beast rangeth in our forest,  
No tiger or wolf prowleth around the fold:  
Keep thou from our sheepcotes the tainting  
Invisible peril of the darkness.

## 4

### POVRE AME AMOUREUSE

FROM LOUISE LABE, 1555

(*Sapphics*)

WHEN to my lone soft bed at eve returning  
Sweet desir'd sleep already stealeth o'er me,  
My spirit flieth to the fairy-land of  
her tyrannous love.

<sup>1</sup> There is another alcaic translation from Blake on p. 71 in 'Demeter'.  
The Ode on p. 72 is iambic, and the Chorus on pp. 53, 54 is in  
choriambics.

## Poems in

Him then I think fondly to kiss, to hold him  
Frankly then to my bosom ; I that all day  
Have lookèd for<sup>v</sup>him suffering, repining,  
yea many long days.

O blessèd sleep, with flatteries beguile me ;  
So,<sup>v</sup>if I ne'er may<sup>v</sup>of a surety have<sup>v</sup>him,  
Grant to my poor soul amorous the dark gift  
of this illusion.

### 5

## THE FOURTH DIMENSION

(*Hendecasyllables*)

TRUEST-HEARTED of early friends, that Eton  
Long since gáve to me,—Ah ! 'tis all a life-time,—  
With my faithfully festive auspication  
Of Christmas merriment, this idle item.

Plato truly believ'd his archetypal  
Idēas to possess the fourth dimension:  
For since our solid is triple, but always  
Its shade only double, solids as *umbræ*  
Must lack equally one dimension also.  
Could Plato<sup>v</sup>have avoided or denied it?

So Saint Paul, when in argument opposing  
To our earthly bodies bodies celestial,  
Meant just those pretty Greek aforesaid abstracts  
Of four Plātonical divine dimensions.

If this be not a holy consolation  
More than plumpudding and a turkey roasted,  
Whereto you but address a third dimension,  
Try it, pray, as a pill to aid digestion :  
I can't find anything better to send you.

## *Classical Prosody*

### 6

JOHANNES MILTON, *Senex*

#### *Seasons*

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,  
'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him  
    praise,  
Should love the creature forgetting the Crēator,  
Nor unto Him<sup>v</sup>in suff'ring and sorrow turn me :  
Nay how coud I withdraw me from<sup>v</sup>His embracing?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,  
Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly  
His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose ēternal ;  
Therefore will I be bound to no studied system  
Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,  
Nor seek to pleāse Him in any foolish invention,  
Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty  
And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy :

But I cherish my freedom in loving service,  
Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking  
Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness  
Confiding always on<sup>v</sup>His excellent greatness.

### 7

PYTHAGORAS

#### *Seasons*

THOU vainly, O Man, self-deceiver, exaltest  
Thyself the king and only thinker of this world,  
Where life aboundeth infinite to destroy thee.

## *Poems in*

Well-guided are thy forces and govern'd bravely,  
But like a tyrant crüel or savage monster  
Thou disregardest ignorantly all bëing  
Save only thine own insubordinate ruling:

As if the flowër held not a happy pact with Spring;  
As if the brutes lack'd reason and sorrow's torment;  
Or ev'n divine love from the small atoms grew not,  
Their grave affection unto thy passion mingling.

An truly were it nobler and better wisdom  
To fear the blind thing blindly, lest it espy thee;  
And scrupulously do<sup>v</sup>honour to dumb creatures,

No one offending impiously, nor forcing  
To service of vile uses ; ordering rather  
Thy slave to beauty, compelling lovingkindness.

So should desire, the only priestess of Nature  
Divinely inspir'd, like a good monarch rule thee,  
And lead thee onward in the consummate motion  
Of life eternal unto heav'nly perfection.

# *Classical Prosody*

## *Elegiacs*

8

AMIEL

WHY, O Maker of all, madest thou man with affections  
Tender above thyself, scrupulous and passionate?  
Nay, if compassionate thou art, why, thou lover of men,  
Hidest thou thy face so pitilessly from us?  
If thou in priesthoods and altar-glory delitest,  
In torment and tears of trouble and suffering,  
Then wert thou displeas'd looking on soft human emotion,  
Thou must scorn the devout love of a sire to a son.  
'Twas but vainly of old, Man, making Faith to approach thee,  
Held an imagin'd scheme of providence in honour;  
And, to redeem thy praise, judg'd himself cause, took upon  
him  
Humbly the impossible burden of all misery.  
Now casteth he away his books and logical idols  
Leaveth again his cell of terrified penitence;  
And that stony goddess, his first-born fancy, dethroning,  
Hath made after his own homelier art another;  
Made sweet Hope, the modest unportion'd daughter of  
anguish,  
Whose brimming eye sees but dimly what it looketh on;  
Dreaming a day when fully, without curse or horrible cross,  
Thou wilt deign to reveal her vision of happiness.

9

AH, what a change! Thou, who didst emptily thy happiness  
seek  
In pleasure, art finding thy pleasure in happiness.  
Slave to the soul, whom thou heldest in slavery, art thou?  
Thou, that wert but a vain idol, adored a goddess?



## *Poems in*

10

### WALKING HOME

FROM THE CHINESE

THOUSAND threads of rain and fine white wreathing of air-  
mist

Hide from us earth's greenness, hide the enarching azure.  
Yet will a breath of Spring homeward convoying attend us,  
And the mellow flutings of passionate Philomel.

11

### THE RUIN

FROM THE CHINESE

THESE grey stones have rung with mirth and lordly carousel ;  
Here proud kings mingled pōetry and ruddy wine.  
All hath pass'd long ago ; nought but this rūin abideth,  
Sadly in eyeless trance gazing upon the river.  
Wouldst thou know who here visiteth, dwelleth and singeth  
also,  
Ask the swallows flyīng from sunny-wall'd Italy.

12

### REVENANTS

FROM THE FRENCH

AT dead of unseen night ghosts of the departed assembling  
Flit to the graves, where each in body had burial.  
Ah, then rēvisiting my sad heart their desolate tomb  
Troop the desires and loves vainly buried long ago.

## *Classical Prosody*

### 13

#### FROM THE GREEK

MORTAL though I bé, yea ephemeral, if but a moment  
I gaze up to the night's starry domain of heaven,  
Then no longer on earth I stand ; I touch the Creator,  
And my lively spirit drinketh immortality.

### 14

#### ANNIVERSARY

SEE, Love, a year is pass'd : in harvest our summer endeth :  
Praising thee the solemn festival I celebrate.  
Unto us all our days are love's anniversaries, each one  
In turn hath ripen'd something of our happiness.  
So, lest heart-contented adown life easily floating,  
We note not the passage while living in the delight,  
I have honour'd always the attentive vigil of Autumn,  
And thy day set apart holy to fair Memory.

### 15

#### COMMUNION OF SAINTS

#### FROM ANDRÉ CHENIER

WHAT nappy bonds together unite you, ye living and dead,  
Your fadeless love-bloom, your manifold memories.

#### EPITAPHS

### 16

FIGHT well, my comrades, and prove your bravery. Me too  
God call'd out, but crown'd early before the battle.

## Poems in

17

I DIED in very flow'r : yet call me not unhappy therefore,  
Ye that against sweet life once a lament have utter'd.

18

WHEN thou, my belovèd, diedst, I saw heaven open,  
And all earthly delight inhabiting Paradise.

19

WHERE thou art better I too were, dearest, anywhere, than  
Wanting thy well-lov'd lovely presence anywhere.

20

### IBANT OBSCURI

*A line for line paraphrase of a part of  
Virgil's Æneid, Bk. VI.*

THEY wer' amid the shadows by night in loneliness obscure  
Walking forth i' the void and vasty dominyon of Ades;  
As by an uncertain moonray secretly illumin'd 270  
One goeth in the forest, when heav'n is gloomily clouded,  
And black night hath robb'd the colours and beauty from all  
things.

Here in Hell's very jaws, the threshold of darkening Orcus,  
Have the avenging Cares laid their sleepless habitation,  
Wailing Grief, pallid Infections, & heart-stricken Old-age,  
Dismal Fear, unholy Famine, with low-groveling Want,  
Forms of spectral horror, gaunt Toil and Death the devourer,  
And Death's drowsy brother, Torpor ; with whom, an inane  
rout, 278  
All the Pleasures of Sin; there also the Furies in ambush

## Classical Prosody

Chamber of iron, afore whose bars wild War bloodyhanded  
Raged, and mad Discord high brandisht her venomous locks.

Midway of all this tract, with secular arms an immense elm  
Reareth a crowd of branches, aneath whose leafy protection  
Vain dreams thickly nestle, clinging unto the foliage on high:  
And many strange creatures of monstrous form and features  
Stable about th' entrance, Centaur and Scylla's abortion,  
And hundred-handed Briareus, and Lerna's wildbeast  
Roaring amain, and clothed in frightful flame the Chimæra,  
Gorgons and Harpies, <sup>1</sup> and Pluto's three-bodied ogre.

In terror Æneas upheld his sword to defend him, 290  
With ready naked point confronting their dreaded onset:  
And had not the Sibyl warn'd how these lively spirits were  
All incorporeal, flitting in thin maskery of form,  
He had assail'd their host, and wounded vainly the void air.

Hence is a road that led them a-down to the Tartarean  
streams,

Where Acheron's whirlpool impetuous, into the reeky  
Deep of Cokytos disgorgeth, with muddy burden.  
These floods one ferryman serveth, most awful of aspect,  
Of squalor infernal, Chāron: all filthily unkempt  
That woolly white cheek-fleece, and fiery the blood-shotten  
eyeballs: 300

On one shoulder a cloak knotted-up his nudity vaunteth.  
He himself plieth oar or pole, manageth tiller and sheet,  
And the relics of mén in his ash-grey barge ferries over;  
Already old, but green to a god and hearty will age be.

Now hitherward to the bank much folk were crowding,  
a medley

Of men and matrons; nor did death's injury conceal  
Bravespirited heroes, young maidens beauteous unwed,  
And boys borne to the grave in sight of their sorrowing sires.

Countless as in the forest, at a first white frosting of autumn  
Sere leaves fall to the ground; or like whenas over the ocean  
Myriad birds come thickly flocking, when wintry December 311  
Drives them afar southward for shelter upon sunnier shores,

## Poems in

So throng'd they ; and each his watery journey demanded,  
All to the further bank stretching-out their arms impatient:  
But the sullen boatman took now one now other at will,  
While some from the river forbade he', an' drave to a distance.

Æneas in wonder alike and deep pity then spake.

'Tell-me,' said he, ' my guide, why flock these crowds to the  
water ?

Or what seek the spirits ? or by what prejudice are these  
Rudely denied, while those may upon the solemn river em-  
bark ?'

320

T'whom \* then briefly again the Averniân priestess in answer.  
' O Son of Anchises, heavn's true-born glorious offspring,  
Deep Cokytos it is thou sêest & Hell's Stygiân flood,  
Whose dread sanctiôn alone Jove's oath from falsehood  
assureth.

These whom thou pitiedst, th' outcast and unburied are they ;  
That ferryman Châron ; those whom his bark carries over  
Are the buried ; nor ever may mortal across the livid lake  
Journey, or e'er upon Earth his bones lie peacefully entomb'd :  
Haunting a hundred years this mournful plain they wander  
Doom'd for a term, which term expired they win to  
deliv'rance.'

330

Then he that harken'd stood agaze, his journey arrested,  
Grieving at heart and much pitying their unmerited lot.  
There miserably fellow'd in death's indignity saw he  
Leucaspis with his old Lycian seachieften Orontes,  
Whom together from Troy in home-coming over the waters  
Wild weather o'ermaster'd, engulfing both shipping and  
men.

And lo ! his helmsman, Palinurus, in eager emotion,  
Who on th' Afric course, in bright star-light, with a fair wind,  
Fell by slumber opprest unheedfully into the wide sea :  
Whom i' the gloom when hardly he knew, now changed in  
affliction,

340

\* Line 321. ' T'whom ' is from Milton, in imitation of Virgil's admired  
Olli. It is not admitted in the ordinary prosody.

## *Classical Prosody*

First he addrest. 'What God, tell-me O Palinurus, of all  
gods

Plúckt you away and drown'd i' the swift wake-water abandon'd?

For never erst nor in else hath kind responsive Apollo  
Led-me astray, but alone in this thing wholly deluded,  
When he aver'd that you, to remote Ausōnia steering,  
Safe would arrive. Where now his truth? Is this the  
promis'd faith?

But he, 'Neither again did Phœbus wrongly bespeak thee,  
My general, nor yet did a god in his enmity drown me:  
For the tiller, wherewith I led thy fleet's navigation,  
And still clung to, was in my struggling hold of it unshipt, 350  
And came with-me' o'erboard. Ah! then, by ev'ry accurst  
sea,

Tho' in utter despair, far less mine own peril awed me  
Than my thought o' the ship, what harm might háp to her,  
yawing

In the billows helmiess, with a high wind and threatening  
gale.

Two nights and one day buffeted held I to the good spar  
Windborne, with the current far-drifting, an' on the second  
morn

Saw, when a great wave raised me aloft, the Italian highlands;  
And swimming-on with effort got ashore, nay already was  
saved,

Had not there the wrecking savages, who spied-me defence-  
less,

Scarce clinging outwearied to a rock, half-drowned & speech-  
less, 360

Beát me to death for hope of an unfound booty upon me.  
Now to the wind and tidewash a sport my poor body rolleth.  
Wherefore thee, by heav'n's sweet light & airness, I pray,  
By thy Sire's memories, thy hope of youthful Iulus,  
Rescue-me from these ills, brave master; Go to Velija,  
O'er my mortality's spoil cast thou th' all-hallowing dust:

## Poems in

Or better, if so be the goddess, heav'n's lady-Creatress,  
Show thee the way,—nor surely without high favoring impulse  
Mak'st thou ventur' across these floods & black Ereban lake,—  
Give thy hand-to-me', an' o'er their watery boundary bring  
me 370

Unto the haven of all, death's home of quiet abiding.'  
Thus he lamented, anon spake sternly the maid of Avernus.  
' Whence can such unruly desire, Palinurus, assail thee?  
Wilt thou th' Eumenidan waters visit unburied? o'erpass  
Hell's Stygian barrier? Châron's boat unbidden enter?  
Cease to believe that fate can be by prayer averted.  
Let my sooth a litel thy cruel destiny comfort  
Surely the people of all thy new-found country, determin'd  
By heav'n-sent omens will achieve thy purification, 379  
Build thee a tomb of honour with yearly solemnity ordain'd,  
And dedicate for ever thy storied name to the headland.'

These words lighten awhile his fear, his sadness allaying,  
Nor vain was the promise his name should eternally survive.

They forthwith their journey renew, tending to the water:  
Whom when th' old boatman descried silently emerging  
Out o' the leafy shadows, advancing t'ward the river-shore,  
Angrily gave he challenge, imperious in salutation.  
' Whosoever thou be, that approachest my river all-arm'd,  
Stand to announce thyself, nor further make footing onward.  
Here 'tis a place of ghosts, of night & drowsy delusion: 390  
Forbidden unto living mortals is my Stygian keel:  
Truly not Alkides embarkt I cheerfully, nor took  
Of Theseus or Pirithous glad custody, nay though  
God-sprung were they both, warriors invincible in might:  
Hé 'twas would sportively the guard of Tartarus enchain,  
Yea and from the palace with gay contumely dragged him:  
Théy to ravish Hell's Queen from Pluto's chamber attempted.'

Then thus th' Amphrysian prophetess spake briefly in  
answer.

' No such doughty designs are ours, Cease thou to be movèd!  
Nor these sheeny weapons intend force. Cerberus unvert

## Classical Prosody

Surely for us may affray the spirits with howling eternal, 401  
And chaste Persephone enjoy her queenly seclusion.

Troian Æneas, bravest and gentlest-hearted,  
Hath left earth to behold his father in out-lying Ades.  
If the image<sup>1</sup> of a so great virtue doth not affect thee,  
Yet this bough<sup>1</sup>—glittering she reveal'd its golden  
avouchment—

‘Thou mayst know.’ Forthwith his bluster of heart was  
appeasèd :

Nor word gave he, but admiring the celestial omen,  
That bright sprigg of weird for so long period unseen,  
Quickly he-tùrneth about his boat, to the margin ap-  
proaching, 410

And the spirits, that along the gun'al benchways sat in order,  
Drave he ashore, offering readyroom: but when the vessel took  
Ponderous Æneas, her timbers crankily straining  
Creak'd, an' a brown water came trickling through the upper  
seams.

Natheless both Sibyl and Hero, slow wafted across stream,  
Safe on th' ooze & slime's hideous desolation alighted.

Hence the triple-throated bellows of Cerberus invade  
All Hell, where opposite the arrival he lies in a vast den.  
But the Sibyl, who mark'd his necklaces of stiffening snakes,  
Cast him a cake, poppy-drench'd with drowsiness and honey-  
sweeten'd. 420

He, rabid and distending a-hungry' his triply-cavern'd jaws,  
Gulp'd the proffer'd morsel ; when slow he-relaxt his immense  
bulk,

And helplessly diffused fell out-sprawl'd over the whole cave.  
Æneas fled by, and left full boldly the streamway,  
That biddeth all men across but alloweth ne'er a returning.

Already now i' the air were voices heard, lamentation,  
And shrilly crying of infant souls by th' entry of Ades.  
Babes, whom unportion'd of sweet life, unblossoming buds,  
One black day carried off and chokt in dusty corruption.—  
Next are they who falsely accused were wrongfully condemn'd



## Poems in

Unto the death: but here their lot by justice is order'd. 431  
Inquisitor Minos, with his urn, summoning to assembly  
His silent council, their deed or slander arraigneth.—  
Next the sullen-hearted, who rashly with else-innocent hand  
Their own life did-away, for hate or weariness of light,  
Imperiling their souls. How gladly, if only in Earth's air,  
Would-they again their toil, discomfort, and pities endure!  
Fate obstructs: deep sadness now, unloveliness awful  
Rings them about, & Styx with ninefold circle enarmeth.—

Not far hence they come to a land extensive on all sides; 440  
Weeping Plain 'tis call'd:—such name such country  
deserveth.

Here the lovers, whom fiery passion hath cruelly consumed,  
Hide in leafy alleys 'and pathways bow'ry, sequester'd  
By woodland myrtle, nor hath Death their sorrow ended.  
Here was Phædra to see, Procris 'and sád Eriphyle,  
She of her unfilial deathdoing wound not ashamèd,  
Evadne, 'and Pasiphae 'and Laodamia,  
And epicene Keneus, a woman to a man metamorphos'd,  
Now by Fate converted again to her old feminine form.

'Mong these shades, her wound yet smarting ruefully, Dido  
Wander'd throu' the forest-obscurity; and Æneas 451  
Standing anigh knew surely the dim form, though i' the  
darkness

Veil'd,—as when one seëth a young moon on the horizon,  
Or thinketh to 'have seen i' the gloaming her delicate horn;  
Tearfully in oncelov'd accents he-lovingly address her.  
'Unhappy! ah! too true 'twas told me 'O unhappy Dido,  
Dead thou wert; to the fell extreme didst thy passion ensue.  
And was it I that slew-thee? Alas! Smite falsity, ye  
heav'ns!

And Hell-fury attest-me', if here any sanctity reigneth,  
Unwilling, O my Queen, my step thy kingdom abandon'd. 460  
Me the command of a god, who here my journey determines  
Through Ereban darkness, through fields sown with  
desolation,

## *Classical Prosody*

Drive-me to wrong my heart. Nay tho' deep-pain'd to  
desert thee

I ne'er thought to provoke thy pain of mourning eternal.  
Stay yet awhile, ev'n here unlook'd-for again look upon me :  
Fly-me not ere the supreme words that Fate granteth us are  
said.'

Thus he : but the spirit was raging, fiercely defiant,  
Whom he approach'd with words to appease, with tears for  
atonement.

She to the ground downcast her <sup>l</sup>eyes in fixity averted;  
Nor were her features more by his pleading affected, 470  
Than wer' a face of flint, or of ensculptur'd alabaster.  
At length she started disdainful, an' angrily withdrew  
Into a shady thicket : where her grief kindly Sychæus  
Sooth'd with other memories, first love and virginal embrace.  
And ever Æneas, to remorse by deep pity soften'd,  
With brimming eyes pursued her queenly figure disappearing.

Thence the Sibyl to the plain's extremest boundary led him,  
Where world-fam'd warriors, a lionlike company, haunted.  
Here great Tydeus saw he eclips'd, & here the benighted  
Phantom of Adrastus, <sup>l</sup> of stalwart Parthenopæus. 480  
Here long mourn'd upon earth went all that prowess of Ilium  
Fallen in arms ; whom, when he beheld them, so many and  
great,

Much he-bewail'd. By Thersilochus his mighty brothers  
stood,

Children of Antenor ; here Demetriân Polyphates,  
And Idæus, in old chariot-pose dreamily stalking.  
Right and left the spirits flocking on stood crowding around  
him ;

Nor their eyes have enough ; they touch, find joy unwonted  
Marching in equal stép, and eager of his coming enquire.  
But th' Argive leaders, and they that obey'd Agamemnon  
When they saw that Trojan in arms come striding among  
them, 490

Old terror invaded their ranks : some fled stricken, as once

## Poems in

They to the ships had fled for shelter ; others the alarm raise,  
But their thin utterance mock'd vainly the lips wide parted.  
Here too Deiphobus he espied, his fair body mangled,  
Cruelly dismember'd, disfeatur'd cruelly his face,  
Face and hands ; and lo ! shorn closely from either temple,  
Gone wer' his ears, and maim'd each nostril in impious  
outrage.

Barely he-knew him again cowering shamefastly ' an' hiding  
His dire plight, & thus he 'his old companyon accosted.  
'Noblest Deiphobus, great Teucer's intrepid offspring, 500  
Who was it, inhuman, coveted so cruel a vengeance ?  
Who can hav' adventur'd on thee ? That last terrible night  
Thou wert said to hav' exceeded thy bravery, an' only  
On thy faln enemies wert faln by weariness o'ercome.  
Wherefor' upon the belov'd sea-shore thine empty sepulchral  
Mound I erected, aloud on thy ghost tearfully calling.  
Name and shield keep for-thee the place ; but thy body, dear  
friend,

Found I not, to commit to the land ere sadly ' I left it.'

Then the son of Priam ' 'I thought not, friend, to reproach  
thee :

Thou didst all to the full, ev'n my shade's service, accom-  
plish. 501

'Twas that uninterdicted adultress from Lacedæmon  
Drove-me to doom, & planted in hell, her trophy triumphant.  
On that night,—how vain a security and merrymaking  
Then sullied us thou know'st, yea must too keenly re-  
member,—

When the ill-omened horse o'erleapt Troy's lofty defences,  
Dragg'd in amidst our town pregnant with a burden of arm'd  
men.

She then, her Phrygian women in feign'd phrenzy collecting,  
All with torches aflame, in wild Bacchic orgy paraded,  
Flaring a signal aloft to her ambusht confederate Greeks.

I from a world of care had fled with weariful eyelids 520  
Unto my unhappy chamber', an' lay fast lockt in oblivyon,

## Classical Prosody

Sunk to the depth of rest as a child that nought will awaken.  
Meanwhile that paragon helpmate had robb'd me of all arms,  
E'en from aneath the pillow my blade of trust purloining ;—  
Then to the gate ; wide flings she it op'n an' calls Menelaus.  
Would not a so great service attach her faithful adorer ?  
Might not it extinguish the repute of her earlier illdeeds ?  
Brief-be the tale. Menelaus arrives : in company there came  
His crime-counsellor Æolides. . So, and more also  
Déal-ye', O Gods, to the Greeks ! an' if I call justly upon  
you.—

But thou ; what fortune hitherward, in turn prithy tell me,  
Sent-thee alive, whether erring upon the bewildering Ocean,  
Or high-prompted of heav'n, or by Fate wearily hunted,  
That to the sunless abodes and dusky demesnes thou  
approachest ?' 530

Ev'n as awhile they thus converse it is already mid-day  
Unperceiv'd, but aloft earth's star had turn'd to declining.  
And haply' Æneas his time in parley had outgone,  
Had not then the Sibyl with word of warning avized him.  
'Night hieth, Æneas ; in tears our journey delayeth.  
See our road, that it here in twain disparteth asunder ; 540  
This to the right, skirting by th' high city-fortresses of Dis,  
Endeth in Elysium, our path ; but that to the leftward  
Only receives their feet who wend to eternal affliction.'  
Deiphobus then again, 'Speak not, great priestess, in anger ;  
I will away to refill my number among th' unfortun'd.  
Thou, my champyon, adieu ! Go where thy glory awaits  
thee !'

When these words he 'had spok'n, he-turn'd and hastily was  
fled.

Æneas then look'd where leftward, under a mountain,  
Outspread a wide city lay, threefold with fortresses engirt,  
Lickt by a Tartarean river of live fire, the torrentiâl 550  
Red Phlegethon, and huge boulders his roundy bubbles be :  
Right i' the front stareth the columnar gate adamantine,  
Such that no battering warfare of mén or immortals

## Poems in

Æ'er might shake; blank-faced to the cloud its bastion  
upstands.

Tisiphone thereby in a bloodspotty robe sitteth alway  
Night and day guarding sleeplessly the desperat entrance,  
Wherefrom an awestirring groan-cry and fierce clamour  
outburst,

Sharp lashes, insane yells, dragg'd chains and clanking of  
iron.

Æneas drew back, his heart by' his hearing affrighted :  
'What manner of criminals, my guide, now tell-me,' he-  
question'd, 560

'Or what their penalties? what this great wail that ariseth?'  
Answering him the divine priestess, 'Brave hero of Ilûm,  
O'er that guilty threshold no breath of purity may come :  
But Hecate, who gave-me to rule i' the groves of Avernus,  
Herself led me around, & taught heav'n's high retribution.  
Here Cretan Rhadamanthus in unblest empery reigneth,  
Secret crime to punish,—full surely he-wringeth avowal  
Even of all that on earth, by vain impunity harden'd,  
Men sinning have put away from thought till'impenitent  
death.

On those convicted tremblers then leapeth avenging 570  
Tisiphone with keen flesh-whips and viper's scourges,  
And of her implacable sisters inviteth attendance.'

—Now sudden on screeching hinges that portal accurs'd  
Flung wide its barriers.—'In what dire custody, mark thou,  
Is the threshold ! guarded by how grim sentry the doorway !  
More terrible than they the ravin'd insatiable Hydra  
That sitteth angry within. Know too that Tartarus itself  
Dives sheer gaping aneath in gloomy profundity downward  
Twice that height that a man looketh-up t'ward airy  
Olympus.

Lowest there those children of Earth, Titanian elders, 580  
In the abyss, where once they fell hurl'd, yet wallowing lie.  
There the Alöidæ saw I, th' ungainly rebel twins  
Primæval, that assay'd to devastate th' Empyræan

## *Classical Prosody*

With huge hands, and rob from Jove his kingdom immortal.  
And there Salmoneus I saw, rend'ring heavy payment,  
For that he idly' had mockt heav'n's fire and thunder  
electric ;

With chariot many-yoked and torches brandishing on high  
Driving among 'his Graian folk in Olympian Elis ;  
Exultant as a God he rode in blasphemy worshipt. 589  
Fool, who th' unreckoning tempest and deadly dreaded bolt  
Thought to mimic with brass and confus'd trample of horses !  
But 'him th' Omnipotent, from amidst his cloudy pavilyon,  
Blasted, an' eke his rattling car and smoky pretences  
Extinguish'd at a stroke, scattering<sup>1</sup> his dust to the whirlwind.  
There too huge Tityos, whom Earth that gendereth all  
things

Once foster'd, spreadeth-out o'er nine full roods his immense  
limbs.

On him a wild vulture with hook-beak greedily gorgeth  
His liver upsprouting quick as that Hell-chicken eateth.  
Shé diggeth and dwelleth under the vast ribs, her bloody  
bare neck

Lifting anon : ne'er loathes-she the food, ne'er fails the re-  
newal. 600

Where wer' an end their names to relate, their crimes and  
torments ?

Some o'er whom a hanging black rock, slipping at very  
point of

Falling, ever threateneth : Couches luxurious invite  
Softly-cushion'd to repose : Tables for banqueting outlaid  
Tempt them ever-famishing : hard by them a Fury regardeth,  
And should théy but a hand uplift, trembling to the dainties,  
She with live firebrand and direful yell springeth on them.

Their crimes,—not to' hav lov'd a brother while love was  
allow'd them ;

Or to' hav struck their father, or inveigled a dependant ; 609  
Or who chancing alone on wealth prey'd lustfully thereon,  
Nor made share with others, no greater company than they :

## Poems in

Some for adultery slain; some their bright swords had  
offended

Drawn i' the wrong: or a master's trust with perfidy had met:  
Dungeon'd their penalties they await. Look not to be  
answer'd

What that doom, nor th' end of these men think to deter-  
mine.

Sóme aye roll heavy rocks, some whirl dizzy on the revolving  
Spokes of a pendant wheel: sitteth and to eternity shall sit  
Unfortun'd Theseus; while sad Phlegias saddeneth hell

With vain oyez to' all loud crying a tardy repentance,  
"Walk, O man, i' the fear of Gód, and learn to be righteous!"

Here another, who sold for gold his country, promoting 621  
Her tyrant; or annull'd for a base bribe th' inviolate law.

This one had unfather'd his blood with bestial incest:

All some fearful crime had dared & vaunted achievement.

What mind could harbour the offence of such recollection,

Or lend welcoming ear to the tale of iniquity and shame,

And to the pains wherewith such deeds are justly requited?

Ev'n when thus she' had spok'n, the priestess dear to  
Apollo,

'But, ready, come let us ón, perform~we the order appointed!

Hast'n~we (saith~she), the wall forged on Cyclopián anvils

Now I see, an' th' archway in Ætna's furnace attemper'd, 631

Where my lore biddeth us to depose our high-privileg'd  
gift.'

Then together they trace i' the drooping dimness a foot-  
path,

Whereby, faring across, they arrive at th' arches of iron.

Æneas stept into the porch, and duly besprinkling

His body with clear water affixt his bough to the lintel;

And, having all perform'd at length with ritual exact,

They came out on a lovely pleasance, that dream'd-of oasis,

Fortunate isle, the abode o' the blest, their fair Happy  
Woodland.

Here is an ampler sky, those meads ar' azur'd by a gentler

## *Classical Prosody*

Sun than th' Earth, an' a new starworld their darkness  
adorneth. 641

Some were matching afoot their speed on a grassy arena,  
In playful combat some wrestling upon the yellow sand,  
Part in a dance-rhythm or poetry's fine phantasy engage;  
While full-toga'd anear their high-priest musical Orpheus  
Bade his prime sev'n tones in varied harmony discourse,  
Now with finger, anon sounding with an ivory plectrum.  
And here Æneas met Teucer's fortunate offspring,  
High-spirited heroes, fair-favor'd sons o' the morning,  
Assarac and Ilos<sup>1</sup> and Dardan founder of Ilîum : 650  
Their radiant chariots he' espied rank't empty afar off,  
Their spears planted afield, their horses wandering at large,  
Grazing around:—as on earth their joy had been, whether  
armour

Or chariot had charmed them, or if 'twere good manage and  
care

Of the gallant warhorse, the delight liv'd here unabated:  
Lo! then others, that about the meadow sat feasting in  
idless,

And chanting for joy a familiar pæan of old earth,  
By fragrant laurel o'ercanopied, where 'twixt enamel'd banks  
Bountiful Eridanus glides throu' their bosky retirement.  
Here were men who bled for honour, their country defend-  
ing; 660

Priests, whose lives wer' a flame of chastity on God's altar;  
Holy poets, content to await their crown of Apollo;  
Discoverers, whose labour had aided life or ennobled;  
Or who fair memories had left through kindly deserving.  
On their brow a fillet pearl-white distinguisheth all these:  
Whom the Sibyl, for they drew round, in question accosted,  
And most Musæus, who tower'd noble among them,  
Center of all that sea of bright faces looking upward.  
'Tell, happy souls, and thou poet and high mystic illustrious,  
Where dwelleth Anchises? what home hath he? for 'tis in  
his quest 670



## Poems in

We hither have made journey across Hell's watery marches.'

Thertó with brief parley rejoin'd that mystic of old-time.  
'In no certain abode we-remain : by turn the forest glade  
Haunt-we, liled stream-bank, sunny mead ; and o'er valley  
and rock

At will rove-we: but if ye aright your purpose arede me,  
Mount-ye the hill: myself will prove how easy the pathway.'  
Speaking he léd: and come to the upland, sheweth a fair  
plain

Gleaming aneath; and they, with grateful adieu, the descent  
made.

Now Lord Anchises was down i' the green valley musing,  
Where the spirits confin'd that await mortal resurrection 680  
While diligently he-mark'd, his thought had turn'd to his  
own kin,

Whose numbers he-reckon'd, an' of all their progeny foretold  
Their fate and fortune, their ripen'd temper an' action.

He then, when he' espied Æneas t'ward him approaching  
O'er the meadow, both hands uprais'd and ran to receive him,  
Tears in his eyes, while thus his voice in high passion outbrake.  
'Ah, thou'rt come, thou'rt come! at length thy dearly  
belov'd grace

Conquering all hath won'tnee the way. 'Tis allow'd to  
behold thee,

O my son,—yea again the familiar raptur' of our speech.  
Nay, I look't for't thus, counting patiently the moments, 690  
And ever expected ; nor did fond fancy betray me.

From what lands, my son, from what life-dangering ocean  
Art-thou arrived? full mighty perils thy path hav' opposèd:  
And how nearly the dark Libyan thy destiny o'erthrew!'

Then 'he, 'Thy spirit, O my sire, 'twas thy spirit often  
Sadly appearing aroused-me to seek thy thy far habitation  
My fleet moors i' the blue Tyrrhene: all with-me goeth well.  
Grant-me to touch thy hand as of old, and thy body embrace.'  
Speaking, awhile in tears his feeling mutinied, and when  
For the longing contact of mortal affection, he out-held 700

## *Classical Prosody*

His strong arms, the figure sustain'd them not: 'twas as  
empty

E'en as a windworn cloud, or a phantom of irrelevant sleep.

On the level bosom of this vale more thickly the tall trees  
Grow, an' aneath quivering poplars and whispering alders  
Lethe's dreamy river throu' peaceful scenery windeth.

Whereby now flitted in vast swarms many people of all lands,  
As when in early summer 'honey-bees on a flowery pasture  
Pill the blossoms, hurrying to' an' fro,—innumerable are they,  
Revisiting the ravish'd lily cups, while all the meadow hums.

Æneas was turn'd to the sight, and marvelling inquired, 710  
'Say, sir, what the river that there i' the vale-bottom I see?  
And who they that thickly along its bank have assembled?'

Then Lord Anchises, 'The spirits for whom a second life  
And body are destined ar' arriving thirsty to Lethe,  
And here drink th' unmindful draught from wells of oblivyon.  
My heart greatly desired of this very thing to acquaint thee,  
Yea, and show-thee the men to-be-born, our glory her'after,  
So to gladden thine heart where now thy voyaging endeth.'

'Must it then be-believ'd, my sire, that a soul which attaineth  
Elysium will again submit to her old body-burden? 720

Is this well? what hap can awake such dire longing in them?'

'I will tell thee', O son, nor keep thy wonder awaiting,'

Answereth Anchises, and all expoundeth in order.

'Know first that the heavens, and th' Earth, and space fluid  
or void,

Night's pallid orb, day's Sun, and all his starry coævals,  
Are by one spirit inly quickened, and, mingling in each part,  
Mind informs the matter, nature's complexity ruling.

Thence the living creatures, man, brute, and ev'ry feather'd  
fowl,

And what breedeth in Ocean aneath her surface of argent:  
Their seed knoweth a fiery vigour, 'tis of airy divine birth, 730  
In so far as unimpeded by an alien evil,  
Nor dull'd by the body's framework condemn'd to corruption.  
Hence the desires and vain tremblings that assail them, unable

## *Poems in Classical Prosody*

Darkly prison'd to arise to celestial exaltation ;  
Nor when death summoneth them anon earth-life to  
    relinquish,  
Can they in all discard their stain, nor wholly away with  
Mortality's plagu spots. It must be that, O, many wild graffs  
Deeply at 'heart engrain'd have rooted strangely upon them :  
Wherefore must suffering purge them, yea, Justice atone them  
With penalties heavy as their guilt : some purify exposed 740  
Hung to the viewless winds, or others long watery searchings  
Low i' the deep wash clean, some bathe in fiery renewal :  
Each cometh unto his own retribution,—if after in ample  
Elysium we attain, but a few, to the fair Happy Woodland,  
Yet slow time still worketh on us to remove the defilement,  
Till it hath eaten away the acquir'd dross, leaving again free  
That first fiery vigour, the celestîal virtue of our life.  
All whom here thou sêest, hav' accomplished purification :  
Unto the stream of Lethe a god their company calleth,  
That forgetful of old failure, pain & disappointment, 750  
They may again into' earthly bodies with glad courage enter.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Twîn be the gates o' the house of sleep : as fable opineth 893  
One is of horn, and thence for a true dream outlet is easy:  
Fair the other, shining perfected of ivory carven ;  
But false are the visions that thereby find passage upward.  
Soon then as Anchises had spok'n, he-led the Sibyl forth  
And his son, and both dismisst from th' ivory portal.

# Classical Prosody

21

## PRIAM & ACHILLES

*Line for line paraphrase of Homer*

*Iliad xxiv. 339-660*

THUS sed-he, & Hermes hearing did not disobey him, 339  
But stoop'd quickly to bind his wingèd shoon on his ankles  
Gold-glittering, which bear him aloft whether over the ocean  
Journeying, or whether over the broad earth, swift as a wild  
wind ;

And his Rod, wherewith men's eyes he drowsily sealeth,  
Whom that he list, or again from torpor awakeneth—his  
wand

Seiz'd he in hand, an' arose & sped forth, God's merry angel.  
Till when soon he espied fair Troy & briny Hellespont,  
Then he alighted on earth, to a young prince likening him-  
self

With first down on his cheek in manhood's most loveable  
prime.

They meantime onward past th' old tomb-tower of Ilos  
Had driven, & were halting awhile their teams to refresh  
them

350

At the river : when now, as nightfall already darken'd,  
Idaeus descried Hermes very near them approaching,  
And turning to Priam, he in earnest whisper address him.

'Haste to advise thee, my liege ! an affair for discretion  
asketh :

I see a man, who I think very soon may annihilate us both.  
Say now, will you we urge our steeds to 'escape from him,  
or stay

Friendly to deal, and humbly with all entreaty beseech him ?'

Thus sed-he, but th' old king lost heart & greatly affrighted  
Felt his skin to be staring, an' all his limbs wer' atremble :  
Dazed he stood : but anon Hermes coming up to him outheld

## Poems in

His right hand, and thus with frank enquiry accosted. 36r

‘Where ever, O father, farest thou with this equipment  
In the hallow’d starlight, when mén are wont to be sleeping?  
Art thou not then afraid o’ the slaughter-breathing Achaeans,  
Those monsters of fury relentless lurking around thee?  
Haply an if one here espied thee, neath the flying night  
Convoying such a prize, how then would thy business be?  
Thyself art not young, and th’ old man here thy attendant  
Scarce would serve to protect thee against whoso sh<sup>d</sup> attack  
thee. 369

Ne’ertheless I’d not wrong thee a whit, would rather against all  
Strive to defend ; for like mine own father thou appearest.’

Him then in answer addrest god-like Priam, Ilyon’s old king.  
‘Truly it is very much, my dear son, as thou opinest ;  
Yet some god, ’tw<sup>d</sup> appear, vouchsafes me a kindly protection,  
Sending upon my journey to meet me so able a helper  
As thyself, for in outward mien not comelier art thou  
Than thou show’st in mind : blessed & happy are thy parents.’

Then bespake him again God’s angel, slayer of Argus.  
‘Nay and what thou say’st, sir, is all most rightfully spoken.  
But now tell me, I pray, & speak thou truthfully plain words,  
If thou’rt convoying thy wealth & costly-treasur’d store 38r  
Unto some outland folk to remain safe for thee in hiding,  
Or whether all your warrior-folk are abandoning Ilyon  
In dismay, since that their bravest champion is undone,  
Thy son, who was fearless afield to resist the Achaeans.’

Him then in answer addrest god-like Priam, Ilyon’s old king.  
‘Who then, valyant sir, may’st thou be, an’ of what parents,  
That to me such fair speech hast made of my unhappy son’s  
death?’

Then bespake him again God’s angel, slayer of Argus.  
‘Thou wouldst prove me, O king, in making question of  
Hector. 390

## *Classical Prosody*

Him many times I have seen scattering with glorious onset  
All the battle's nobley : then too when he drave the Achaeans  
Back to the ships, & smote with trenchant blade the flying  
ranks.

That day stood we aloof wond'ring, for not yet Achilles  
Would let us out to battle, since Atreides had aggriev'd him.  
'Tis to him I give fealty ; the same good ship carried us both.  
Myrmidon is my nation, a man of plenty, Polycctor,  
Is my sire, in his age reverend & grey-headed as thou.  
Six sons hath he beside myself, and I, the seventh son,  
In the brothers' lotterie was cast for service against Troy.  
Now I am come to the plain here scouting, for the Achaeans  
Will sally forth at dawn in full puissance to attack you : 402  
Long they chafe sitting idle, an' all their kings are unable  
In their impacience any more from fight to withhold them.'

Him then in answer addrest god-like Priam, Ilyon's old  
king.

' If that thōū indeed bē the squire of mighty Achilles,  
Tell me the whole truth plainly, I pray, nor seek to delude  
me.

Lýeth yet by the shipping my son's body, or hath Achilles  
Rent and cast it away for beasts piecemeal to devour it?'

Then bespake him again God's angel, slayer of Argus.

' O good sire, not yet hath foul dog nor ravening bird 411  
Made their prey of him : ev'n as he was, so lies he neglected  
Hard by Achilles' ship i' the camp : and already twelve days  
There hath lain, nor doth his flesh rot nor the corrupt worms  
Touch him, that fatten on mankind nor spare the illustrious.  
But when morning appears Achilles cometh & draggeth him  
forth

Trailing around the barrow builded to his old companyon.  
Nor yet is injury done : thou mightest go thither and see  
How dew-fresh he lieth, how free from death's blemish or  
stain :

419

## Poems in

His blood bathèd away, & healèd those heavy wounds all  
Where many coward spears had pierc'd his fair body fallen.  
Such care take the blessed gods for thy dearly lov'd son,  
Yea, tho' he live no more ; since they full heartily lov'd him.'

Thussed-he, & th'old king reassured spake after in answer.  
' See, lad, how good it is to offer due gifts in atonement  
Unto the gods : for, sure as he liv'd, my son never injur'd,  
Nay nor at home forgot, the pöwers that rule in Olympos :  
Wherefore ev'n i' the grave have they his piëty remember'd.  
But come, an'at my hands this daintily-wrought flagon accept:  
And thou guard & guide me, that I, if so be the gods' will,  
Safe may arrive with these my goods to the tent of Achilles.'

Him then in answer address high Zeuses favouring angel.  
' Tempt not a young man, sire ! Thou wilt not lightly corrupt  
me, 433

Thus proffering me presents of worth unknown to Achilles;  
Whom I fear, nor ever my heart for shame would allow me  
So to defraud, lest haply some ill should come to me after.  
But as a guide w<sup>d</sup> I aid-thee ; yea, ev'n to illustrious Argos  
Faithfully both by land and sea w<sup>d</sup> accompany thy way ;  
And not a man for scorn of thine escort sh<sup>d</sup> attack thee.'

Thus saying, on to the car high heav'n's merry fortuner  
upsprang, 440  
And, with his either hand reins and whip seizing alertly,  
Both mules and wearied horses with fresh vigour inspired.  
Till to the fosse they came, & rampart, where the defenders  
Chanc't to be off their guard, busilie with their supper engaged;  
Whom Hermes drowz'd deeply, in senseless slumber immers-  
ing

Ev'ryone, and coming up to the gate & thrusting it open  
Brought Priam into the camp, & Hector'sransom in his train.

So full soon they arriv'd at Achilles' lofty pavilyon,  
That high house which for their king his folk had erected,  
Hewing pines o' the hill for timbering, & for a roof-thatch

## *Classical Prosody*

Harvesting the rushes that grew i' the lowland pastures ;  
And had around the dwelling fenc't for their chieften a wide  
court 452

With thick stakes, & one huge bar clos'd its carriage-entry,  
Made of a pine, which three men of his servants, pulling all  
three

All together, would shift back or forwards, so immense was  
His gate-bar, but Peleïdes would handle it himself.

This gate for th' old king th' archfortuner easily open'd,  
And brought in the treasures of Troy to the house of Achilles;  
And there standing awhile turn'd t'wards Priam, & bespake  
him.

'O sir, I that accost thee am in good truth the celestial  
Hermes, whom great Zeus did charge to attend thee in  
escort: 461

But hence must I turn me again, nor now will I enter  
Into Achilles' sight ; twould make good cause for his anger  
Were an immortal god to befriend men so manifestly.  
Enter thou, and as thou pray'st, in lowliness embrace  
His knees, & by his sire & fair heav'n-born mother implore  
And by his son, that thou may'st melt his soul with emotion.'

With these words Hermes sped away for lofty Olympos :  
And Priam all fearlessly from off his chariot alighted,  
Ordering Idaeus to remain i' the entry to keep watch 470  
Over the beasts : th' old king meanwhile strode doughtily  
onward,

Where Achilles was then most wont to be, and sitting indoors  
Found he him ; all his men sat apart ; for his only attendance  
His squire Automedon and Alkimos in battle upgrown  
Mov'd busilie to and fro serving, for late he had eaten,  
And the supper-table disfurnish'd yet stood anigh him.  
And Priam entering unperceiv'd til he well was among them,  
Clasp'd his knees & seized his hands all humbly to kiss them,  
Those dread murderous hands which his sons so many had  
slain.



## Poems in

As when a man whom spite of fate hath curs'd in his own  
land 480  
For homicide, that he fleeth abroad & seeketh asylum  
With some lord, and they that see him are fill'd with  
amazement,  
Ev'n so now Achilles was amaz'd as he saw Priam enter,  
And the men all wer' amaz'd, & lookt upon each other in turn.

But Priam (as Hermes had bade) bow'd down to beseech  
him.

'O God-like Achilles, thy father call to remembrance,  
How he is halting as I, i' the dark'ning doorway of old age,  
And desolately liveth, while all they that dwell about him  
Vex him, nor hath he one from their violence to defend  
him : 489

Yet but an heareth he aught of thee, thy wellbeing in life,  
Then he rejoiceth an' all his days are glad with a good hope  
Soon to behold thee again, his son safe home from the  
warfare.

But most hapless am I, for I had sons numerous and brave  
In wide Troy ; where bē they now ? scarce is one o' them  
left.

They were fifty the day ye arriv'd hither out of Achaia,  
Nineteen royally born princes from one mother only,  
While the others women of my house had borne me ; of all  
these

Truly the greater part hath Ares in grim battle unstrung.  
But hé, who was alone the city's lov'd guardian and stay,  
Few days since thou slew'st him alas ! his country defending,  
Hector, for whose sake am I-come to the ships of Achaia  
His body dear to redeem, offering thee a ransom abundant.  
O God-like Achilles, have fear o' the gods, pity him too,  
Thy sire also remember, having yet more pity on mé, 504  
Who now stoop me beneath what dread deed mortal ever  
dar'd,

Raising the hand that slew his son pitiably to kiss it.'

## *Classical Prosody*

Then did Achilles yearn for thought of his ancient father  
And from th' old king's seizure his own hand gently disen-  
gag'd.

And each brooded apart ; Priam o'er victorious Hector  
Groan'd, low faln to the ground unnerved at feet of Achilles,  
Who sat mourning awhile his sire, then turn'd to bewailing  
Patroclus ; while loudly the house with their sobbing  
outrang.

512

But when Achilles now had sooth'd his soul in affection,  
And all his bosom had disburden'd of passion extreme,  
Swiftly from off his seat he arose, & old Priam uprais'd,  
In pity & reverence for his age & silvery-blancht head,  
And making full answer address him in airywingèd words.

' Unhappy man ! what mighty sorrows must thy spirit  
endure !

518

Nay, how durst thou come thus alone to the ships of Achaia,  
Into the sight of him who thy sons so many and good  
Spoil'd and sent to the grave ? Verilie thy heart is of iron.  
But come, sit thee beside me upon my couch ; let us alwise  
Now put away our griefs, sore tho' we be plagued with  
affliction.

Truly there is no gain in distressful lamentation,  
Since the eternal gods have assign'd to us unhappy mortals  
Hardship enough, while they enjoy bliss idly without end.

Two jars, say they, await God's hand at th' entry of his court,  
Stor'd ready with free gifts, of good things one, one of evil.  
If mingling from both heav'n's thunderer equally dispense,  
Then will a man's fortune be chequer'd with both sorrow  
and joy ;

530

But to' whom Zeus giveth only of evil that man is outcast,  
Hunger houndeth him on disconsolate over the brave earth,  
Unrespected alike whether of mortals or immortals.  
So my sire Peleus was dow'r'd with favour abounding,  
And, from birth and cradle honour'd, all men living outshone

## Poems in

In wealth & happiness, king o'er his Myrmidon armies :  
And tho' he was but a man, Zeus made him a fair goddess  
    espouse.

But yet an' ev'n to him was an ill thrown in, that he hath  
    not

Sons born into his house to retain its empery,—one son  
Only he gat, one doom'd to a fate untimely, nor ev'n he  
Comforts th' old man at home, since exiled far from him I  
    bide

54<sup>r</sup>

Here in Troy, thy sons' destruction compassing and thine.  
Thou too, sir, we have heard enjoy'd'st good fortune afore-  
    time ;

From Mytilene in Lesbos away to the boundary eastward  
Of Phrygia's highlands, & north to the briny Hellespont.  
Thou, sir, didst all men for wealth & progeny excel :  
But when once th' high gods let loose this mischief anigh  
    thee,

Thy city was compast with nought but fierce battle and blood.  
Bear up, allow thy temper awhile some respite of anguish :  
Thou wilt not benefit thy dear son vainly bewailing,      55<sup>o</sup>  
Nor restore him alive ere thou taste further affliction.'

Him then in answer address god-like Priam, Ilyon's old  
    king.

'Bid me not, O heav'nborn, to be seated, while ever Hector  
Lyeth i' the camp dishonour'd, nay rather quickly with all  
    speed

Fetch him here to my eyes ; & this great ransom apportion'd  
Unto<sup>^</sup>hisworthaccept: may<sup>^</sup>itservethygoodpleasure, & thou  
Safely return to thy home & sire, since now thou allow'st me  
Still to renew my days i' the light o' the sun to behold it.'

Then glancing full dourly bespake him swift-foot Achilles.  
'O sir, vex me no more : myself I am already minded      56<sup>o</sup>  
Now to restore him. Awhile Zeus sent one here to command  
    me,

## *Classical Prosody*

My mother,—& the wizard who hometh in Ocean is her sire.  
Yea, an' I-know, Priam, also^of thee,—think not to deceive  
me—

That 'twas a god who brought-thee hither to the ships of  
Achaia,

Since no mortal alive would dare, nay not one in his prime,  
Here to' intrude, neither c<sup>d</sup> he pass our senteries unseen,  
Nor the resistant bars of my doors easily undo.

Spare then again to provoke my soul o'erstrain'd in affliction,

Lest, old king, I do-thee a wrong in thine enemy's camp,  
Lest I in anger offend mine own honour & sin against God.'

Thus he spake, and th' old king afeard in trembling  
obey'd him. 57<sup>r</sup>

Peleïdes then arose, and sprang out over the doorway  
Like a lion, nor alone; for with him two followers went,  
Automedon the renown'd, and Alkimos, of many heroes  
First in honour since Patroclus was lost to him in death.  
They then quickly the beasts all from their harnessing  
unyoked,

And bidding into the house the herald in royal attendance,  
Made him there to be seated: anon they from the wagon  
lift

Great Hector's body-ransom of ungrudg'd costliness untold:  
Two rich mantles left they, a tunicle of linen also, 58<sup>o</sup>  
Comely to shroud his corpse when 'twas given-up to be  
borne home.

And the women were call'd who laved it an' after anointed  
Laid in a chamber apart, lest if Priam 'haply beheld it  
In his affliction he might restrain not his undying anger,  
But break out and kindle the anguisht heart of Achilles,  
Who might slay him an' in blind recklessness sin against  
God.

So the women-servants lav'd Hector's corpse an' anointed,  
Shrouded it in the linen with broider'd mantle around it:

## Poems in

Then himself Achilles on a fair bier laid it, assisted 589  
By his two followers, and on to Priam's wagon upraised,  
Groaning deeply' and calling aloud on his old companion.

'Be not aggriev'd, Patroclus, against me an' if thōū hearest,  
Tho' i' the grave, that now I allow the surrender of Hector  
Unto his sire, for surely he pays me full ample a ransom.  
Thine is it all, as ever thou sharedst with me in all things.'

With these words he return'd to his house, god-hearted  
Achilles,  
Taking again his accustom'd seat whence late he had upris'n,  
On one side opposite to Priam whom straight he address  
thus.

'Thy son now, sir, is ev'n as thou hast pray'd to me restor'd.  
His body lies on a bier, with dawn thou'rt free to behold  
him 600

And to depart with him home: take thought now but to  
refresh thee.

Nay nor was grand-tress'd Niobe disdainful of eating,  
When her twelve children lay dead in her palace outstretch'd.  
Six blossoming daughters had she 'and six lusty growing  
sons,

But her boys did Apollo'in silvery archery destroy  
Wrathful against her, an' all her daughters Artemis o'erthrew,  
For that against Leto the goddess their great mother had she  
Vaunted, "thou'st two only, but I have borne many myself."  
Then they, tho' but a pair, all her fair quantity fordid.  
Nine days lay they on earth expos'd in butchery, no one  
Could bury them, for men smitten in God's fury were as  
stones. 611

Then the 'high gods themselves came down & their burial  
made.

But Niobe took thought to renounce not food in affliction;  
And somewhere ev'n now, on a mountain pasture among  
rocks,

On Sipylus, where, as 'tis told, all-nightly the nymphs lie,

## *Classical Prosody*

Who by day go dancing along splendent Achelous,  
There in stone the mother sits brooding upon the goddess  
wrong.

But come, now let us also remember, most reverend guest,  
Our food. After again, at what time thou carry him home,  
Thou may'st weep thy son ; heavy too will that sorrowing be.'

Thussed-he, & forthwith went out, & seizing a white sheep  
Kill'd it, an' his followers skinning & dismembering aptly  
Into lesser portions cut it up, which fixing upon spits 623  
Laid they anigh to the fire, & drew off daintily roasted.  
Meanwhile Automedon set fine loaves out on a table  
In baskets, but Achilles made the apportioning of flesh.

Then leapt forth their hands to the good cheer outspread  
afore them.

But when anon they had ta'en their fill of drinking an' eating,  
Then Priam in wonder sat mute as he gaz'd on Achilles,  
In what prime, yea a man whom no god's beauty c<sup>d</sup> excel ;  
And Achilles on comely Priam look'd, marvelling also,  
Considering his gracious address and noble bearing : 631  
Till their hearts wer' appeas'd gazing thus on each other  
intent.

When first broke silence god-like Priam, Ilyon's old king.

' Lead me to bed, heav'n-born, as soon as may be, let us  
both

In kind slumber awhile forgetfully drowse our senses :  
For never hath sweet sleep seal'd mine eyelids for a moment  
Since the sad hour when aneath thy hand mine unhappy son  
fell :

But ever o'erbrooding the deluge of my sorrow I lay  
'Mong the cattle grovelling disgraced i' the mire o' the court-  
yard. 640

But now bread have I eaten again, & pour'd the mellow wine  
Down my throat : but afore until now nought had I eaten.'

## *Poems in Classical Prosody*

Thus sed-he, & Achilles bade his handmaids an' attendants

Place bedsteads i' the south corridor, with mattresses & rugs  
Of fair scarlet dye, and counterpanes spread above them :  
Also ther'on for night-apparel two warm woolly mantles.  
So the women came torches in hand forth from the inner  
rooms,  
And working busilie laid out very quickly the two beds.

Then laughingly to godly Priam spake swift-foot Achilles.

'I must lodge-thee without, dear sir ; lest someone of our  
folk

650

Haply come in : 'tis ever some councillor asking an audience.  
And ther' is old counsel when they sit with me debating.  
If one of all that flock chanc'd here i' the swift-shadowing  
night

Thee to espy, 'tw<sup>d</sup> reach the shepherd, their great Agamem-  
non,

And there might be delay in accomplishing our agreement.  
But come, tell thy mind to me nor make scruple about it,  
How many days thou'rt fain to devote to the mourning of  
Hector,

That for so long a time I await & from battle abstain.'

Whom answer'd then again god-like Priam, Ilyon's old  
king.

'If thou nobly desire me to bate my son's honour in nought,  
Scarce, Achilles. couldst thou with a greater kindness attach  
me. . . .

661

OCTOBER  
&  
OTHER POEMS  
*with occasional verses  
on the war*



PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

- 1-12. POEMS WRITTEN IN 1913. *Ashendene Press, by St. John Hornby. 1914.*  
3. *The Times, Dec. 24, 1913.*  
12. *Times Lit. Sup., Sep. 24, 1914.*  
2, 3, 4. THE TAPESTRY. *Privately printed by F. W. and S. M., Nov. 1925.*  
1-27. OCTOBER & OTHER POEMS. *Heinemann, 1920. [Some of the War Poems are omitted in this reprint, according to R.B.'s instructions.]*



## NOTE

POEM 3.—*As the metre or scansion of this poem was publicly discussed and wrongly analysed by some who admired its effects, it may be well to explain that it and the three other poems in similar measure, 'Flowering Tree', 'In der Fremde', 'The West Front', are strictly syllabic verse on the model left by Milton in 'Samson Agonistes'; except that his system, which depended on exclusion of extra-metrical syllables (that is, syllables which did not admit of resolution by 'elision' into a disyllabic scheme) from all places but the last, still admitted them in that place, thereby forbidding inversion of the last foot. It is natural to conclude that, had he pursued his inventions, his next step would have been to get rid of this anomaly; and if that is done, the result is the new rhythms that these poems exhibit. In this sort of prosody rhyme is admitted, like alliteration, as an ornament at will; it is not needed. My four experiments are confined to the twelve-syllable verse. It is probably agreed that there are possibilities in that long six-foot line which English poetry has not fully explored.*

# OCTOBER

## & OTHER POEMS

DEDICATED TO

GEN. THE RIGHT HON<sup>ble</sup> JAN CHRISTIAAN SMUTS

I

### OCTOBER

APRIL adance in play  
met with his lover May  
where she came garlanded.  
The blossoming boughs o'erhead  
were thrill'd to bursting by  
the dazzle from the sky  
and the wild music there  
that shook the odorous air.

Each moment some new birth  
hasten'd to deck the earth  
in the gay sunbeams.  
Between their kisses dreams :  
And dream and kiss were rife  
with laughter of mortal life.

But this late day of golden fall  
is still as a picture upon a wall  
or a poem in a book lying open unread.  
Or whatever else is shrined  
when the Virgin hath vanishèd :  
Footsteps of eternal Mind  
on the path of the dead.

## *Book IV*

And still of all my dreams  
In turn so swiftly past,  
Each in its fancy seems  
A nobler than the last.

And every eve I say,  
Noting my step in bliss,  
That I have known no day  
In all my life like this.

### 18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,  
White-robed, with silver hair ;  
In your meadows fair,  
Where the willows weep,  
And the sad moonbeam  
On the gliding stream  
Writes her scattered dream :

Angel spirits of sleep,  
Dancing to the weir  
In the hollow roar  
Of its waters deep ;  
Know ye how men say  
That ye haunt no more  
Isle and grassy shore  
With your moonlit play ;  
That ye dance not here,  
White-robed spirits of sleep,  
All the summer night  
Threading dances light ?

## October and other Poems

### 3

#### NOEL: CHRISTMAS EVE, 1913

*Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

A FROSTY Christmas Eve  
when the stars were shining  
Fared I forth alone  
where westward falls the hill,  
And from many a village  
in the water'd valley  
Distant music reach'd me  
peals of bells aringing :  
The constellated sounds  
ran sprinkling on earth's floor  
As the dark vault above  
with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep  
that first Christmas of all  
When the shepherds watching  
by their folds ere the dawn  
Heard music in the fields  
and marveling could not tell  
Whether it were angels  
or the bright stars singing.

Now blessed be the tow'rs  
that crown England so fair  
That stand up strong in prayer  
unto God for our souls :  
Blessed be their founders  
(said I) an' our country folk  
Who are ringing for Christ  
in the belfries to-night  
With arms lifted to clutch  
the rattling ropes that race

## *October and other Poems*

Into the dark above  
and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar  
it was starry music  
Angels' song, comforting  
as the comfort of Christ  
When he spake tenderly  
to his sorrowful flock :  
The old words came to me  
by the riches of time  
Mellow'd and transfigured  
as I stood on the hill  
Heark'ning in the aspect  
of th' eternal silence.

### 4

#### IN DER FREMDE

AH ! wild-hearted wand'rer  
far in the world away  
Restless nor knowest why  
only thou canst not stay  
And now turnest trembling  
hearing the wind to sigh :  
'Twas thy lover calling  
whom thou didst leave forby.

So faint and yet so far  
so far and yet so fain—  
'Return belov'd to me'  
but thou must onward strain :  
Thy trembling is in vain  
as thy wand'ring shall be.  
What so well thou lovest  
thou nevermore shalt see.

## *October and other Poems*

### 5

#### THE PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISTRESS

WE watch'd the wintry moon  
Suffer her full eclipse  
Riding at night's high noon  
Beyond the earth's ellipse.

The conquering shadow quell'd  
Her splendour in its robe :  
And darkling we beheld  
A dim and lurid globe ;

Yet felt thereat no dread,  
Nor waited we to see  
The sullen dragon fled,  
The heav'nly Queen go free.

So if my heart of pain  
One hour o'ershadow thine,  
I fear for thee no stain,  
Thou wilt come forth and shine :

And far my sorrowing shade  
Will slip to empty space  
Invisible, but made  
Happier for that embrace.

### 6

#### NARCISSUS

ALMIGHTY wondrous everlasting  
Whether in a cradle of astral whirlfire  
Or globed in a piercing star thou slumb'rest  
The impassive body of God :

## *October and other Poems*

Thou deep i' the core of earth—Almighty !—  
From numbing stress and gloom profound  
Madest escape in life desirous

To embroider her thin-spun robe.

'Twas down in a wood—they tell—

In a running water thou sawest thyself

Or leaning over a pool : The sedges

Were twinn'd at the mirror's brim

The sky was there and the trees—Almighty !—

A bird of a bird and white clouds floating

And seeing thou knewest thine own image

To love it beyond all else.

Then wondering didst thou speak

Of beauty and wisdom of art and worship

Didst build the fanes of Zeus and Apollo

The high cathedrals of Christ :

All that we love is thine—Almighty !—

Heart-felt music and lyric song

Language the eager grasp of knowledge

All that we think is thine.

But whence?—Beauteous everlasting !—

Whence and whither? Hast thou mistaken?

Or dost forget? Look again! Thou seest

A shadow and not thyself.

### 7

## OUR LADY

### I.

GODDESS azure-mantled and aureoled

That standing barefoot upon the moon

Or throned as a Queen of the earth

Tranquilly smilest to hold

The Child-god in thine arms,

## *October and other Poems*

Whence thy glory? Art not she  
The country maiden of Galilee  
Simple in dowerless poverty  
Who from humble cradle to grave  
    Hadst no thought of this wonder?

When to man dull of heart  
Dawn'd at length graciously  
Thy might of Motherhood  
The starry Truth beam'd on his home;  
Then with insight exalted he gave thee  
The trappings—Lady—wherewith his art  
Delighteth to picture his spirit to sense  
    And that grace is immortal.

Fount of creative Love  
Mother of the Word eternal  
Atoning man with God:  
Who set thee apart as a garden enclosed  
From Nature's all-producing wilds  
To rear the richest fruit o' the Life  
Ever continuing out from Him  
    Urgent since the beginning.

### II.

BEHOLD! Man setteth thine image in the  
    height of Heaven  
And hallowing his untemper'd love  
Crowneth and throneth thee ador'd  
    (Tranquilly joyous to hold  
    The man-child in thine arms)  
God-like apart from conflict to save thee  
To guard thy weak caressive beauty  
With incontaminate jewels of soul  
Courage, patience, and self-devotion:  
    All this glory he gave thee.



## *October and other Poems*

Secret and slow is Nature  
Imperceptibly moving  
With surely determinate aim :  
To woman it fell to be early in prime  
Ready to labour, mould, and cherish  
The delicate head of all Production  
The wistful late-maturing boy  
Who made Knowing of Being.

Therefore art thou ador'd  
Mother of God in man  
Naturing nurse of power :  
They who adore not thee shall perish  
But thou shalt keep thy path of joy  
Envied of Angels because the All-father  
Call'd thee to mother his nascent Word  
And complete the creation.

### 8

#### THE CURFEW TOWER

THRO' innocent eyes at the world awond'ring  
Nothing spake to me more superbly  
Than the round bastion of Windsor's wall

That warding the Castle's southern angle  
An old inheritor of Norman prowess  
Was call'd by the folk the Curfew Tow'r.

Above the masonry's rugged courses  
A turreted clock of Caroline fashion  
Told time to the town in black and gold.

It charmed the hearts of Henry's scholars  
As kingly a mentor of English story  
As Homer's poem is of Ilion :

## *October and other Poems*

Nor e'er in the landscape look'd it fairer  
Than when we saw its white bulk halo'd  
In a lattice of slender scaffoldings.

Month by month on the airy platforms  
Workmen labour'd hacking and hoisting  
Till again the tower was stript to the sun :

The old tow'r? Nay a new tow'r stood there  
From footing to battlemented skyline  
And topt with a cap the slice of a cone

Archæologic and counterfeited  
The smoothest thing in all the high-street.  
As Eton scholars to-day may see :

They—wherever else they find their wonder  
And feed their boyhood on Time's enchantment—  
See never the Tow'r that spoke to me.

### 9

## FLYCATCHERS

SWEET pretty fledgelings, perched on the rail arow,  
Expectantly happy, where ye can watch below  
Your parents a-hunting i' the meadow grasses  
All the gay morning to feed you with flies ;

Ye recall me a time sixty summers ago,  
When, a young chubby chap, I sat just so  
With others on a school-form rank'd in a row,  
Not less eager and hungry than you, I trow,  
With intelligences agape and eyes aglow,  
While an authoritative old wise-acre  
Stood over us and from a desk fed us with flies.

## *October and other Poems*

Dead flies—such as litter the library south-window,  
That buzzed at the panes until they fell stiff-baked on the sill,  
Or are roll'd up asleep i' the blinds at sunrise,  
Or wafer'd flat in a shrunken folio.

A dry biped he was, nurtured likewise  
On skins and skeletons, stale from top to toe  
With all manner of rubbish and all manner of lies.

### IO

#### GHOSTS

MAZING around my mind like moths at a shaded candle.

In my heart like lost bats in a cave fluttering,  
Mock ye the charm whereby I thought reverently to lay you,  
When to the wall I nail'd your reticent effigys?

### II

*Ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης*

Who goes there? God knows. I'm nobody. How should  
I answer?

Can't jump over a gate nor run across the meadow.  
I'm but an old whitebeard of inane identity. Pass on!  
What's left of me to-day will very soon be nothing.

### 12

#### HELL AND HATE

Two demons thrust their arms out over the world,  
Hell with a ruddy torch of fire,  
And Hate with gasping mouth,  
Striving to seize two children fair  
Who play'd on the upper curve of the Earth.

## *October and other Poems*

Their shapes were vast as the thoughts of man,  
But the Earth was small  
As the moon's rim appeareth  
Scann'd through an optic glass.

The younger child stood erect on the Earth  
As a charioteer in a car  
Or a dancer with arm upraised ;  
Her whole form—barely clad  
From feet to golden head—  
Leapt brightly against the uttermost azure,  
Whereon the stars were splashes of light  
Dazed in the gulping beds of space.

The elder might have been stell'd to show  
The lady who led my boyish love ;  
But her face was graver than e'er to me  
When I look'd in her eyes long ago,  
And the hair on her shoulders fal'n  
Nested its luminous brown  
I' the downy spring of her wings :  
Her figure aneath was screen'd by the Earth,  
Whereoff—so small that was  
No footing for her could be—  
She appeared to be sailing free  
I' the glide and poise of her flight.

Then knew I the Angel Faith,  
Who was guarding human Love.

Happy were both, of peaceful mien,  
Contented as mankind longeth to be,  
Not merry as children are ;  
And show'd no fear of the Fiends' pursuit,  
As ever those demons clutched in vain ;

## October and other Poems

And I, who had fear'd awhile to see  
Such gentleness in such jeopardy,  
Lost fear myself; for I saw the foes  
Were slipping aback and had no hold  
On the round Earth that sped its course.

The painted figures never could move,  
But the artist's mind was there:  
The longer I look'd the more I knew  
They were falling, falling away below  
To the darkness out of sight.

*This poem was written December 16, 1913. It is the description of a little picture hanging in my bedroom: it had been painted for me as a New Year's gift more than thirty years before, and I described it partly because I never exactly knew what it meant. When the war broke out I remembered my poem and sent it to 'The Times', where it appeared in the 'Literary Supplement', September 24, 1914.*

### 13

## ODE ON THE TERCENTENARY COM- MEMORATION OF SHAKESPEARE

1916

KIND dove-wing'd Peace, for whose green olive-crown  
The noblest kings would give their diadems,  
Mother who hast ruled our home so long,  
How suddenly art thou fled!  
Leaving our cities astir with war;  
And yet on the fair fields deserted  
Lingerest, wherever the gaudy seasons  
Deck with excessive splendour  
The sorrow-stricken year,  
Where cornlands bask and high elms rustle gently,  
And still the unweeting birds sing on by brae and bourn.

## *October and other Poems*

The trumpet blareth and calleth the true to be stern  
Be then thy soft reposeful music dumb ;  
Yet shall thy lovers awhile give ear  
—Tho' in war's garb they come—  
To the praise of England's gentlest son ;  
Whom when she bore the Muses lov'd  
Above the best of eldest honour  
—Yea, save one without peer—  
And by great Homer set,  
Not to impugn his undisputed throne,  
The myriad-hearted by the mighty-hearted one.

For God of His gifts pour'd on him a full measure,  
And gave him to know Nature and the ways of men :  
To dower with inexhaustible treasure  
A world-conquering speech,  
Which surg'd as a river high-descended  
That gathering tributaries of many lands  
Rolls through the plain a bounteous flood,  
Picturing towers and temples  
And ruin of bygone times,  
And floateth the ships deep-laden with merchandise  
Out on the windy seas to traffic in foreign climes.

Thee SHAKESPEARE to-day we honour ; and evermore,  
Since England bore thee, the master of human song,  
Thy folk are we, children of thee,  
Who knitting in one her realm  
And strengthening with pride her sea-borne clans,  
Scorn'st in the grave the bruize of death.  
All thy later-laurel'd choir  
Laud thee in thy world-shrine :  
London's laughter is thine ;  
One with thee is our temper in melancholy or might,  
And in thy book Great-Britain's rule readeth her right.

## *October and other Poems*

Her chains are chains of Freedom, and her bright arms  
Honour Justice and Truth and Love to man.

Though first from a pirate ancestry

She took her home on the wave,

Her gentler spirit arose disdainful,

And smiting the fetters of slavery

Made the high seaways safe and free,

In wisdom bidding aloud

To world-wide brotherhood,

Till her flag was hail'd as the ensign of Liberty,

And the boom of her guns went round the earth in salvos  
of peace.

And thou, when Nature bow'd her mastering hand

To borrow an ecstasy of man's art from thee,

Thou her poet secure as she

Of the shows of eternity,

Didst never fear thy work should fall

To fashion's craze nor pedant's folly

Nor devastator whose arrogant arms

Murder and maim mankind ;

Who when in scorn of grace

He hath batter'd and burn'd some loveliest dearest shrine,

Laugheth in ire and boasteth aloud his brazen god.

\* \* \* \* \*

I saw the Angel of Earth from strife aloof

Mounting the heavenly stair with Time on high,

Growing ever younger in the brightening air

Of the everlasting dawn :

It was not terror in his eyes nor wonder,

That glance of the intimate exaltation

Which lieth as Power under all Being,

And broodeth in Thought above,

As a bird wingeth over the ocean,

Whether indolently the heavy water sleepeth

Or is dash'd in a million waves, chafing or lightly laughing.

## *October and other Poems*

I hear his voice in the music of lamentation,  
In echoing chant and cadenced litany,  
In country song and pastoral piping  
And silvery dances of mirth :  
And oft, as the eyes of a lion in the brake,  
His presence hath startled me,  
In austere shapes of beauty lurking,  
Beautiful for Beauty's sake ;  
As a lonely blade of life  
Ariseth to flower whensoever the unseen Will  
Stirreth with kindling aim the dark fecundity of Being.

Man knoweth but as in a dream of his own desire  
The thing that is good for man, and he dreameth well :  
But the lot of the gentle heart is hard  
That is cast in an epoch of life,  
When evil is knotted and demons fight,  
Who know not, they, that the lowest lot  
Is treachery hate and trust in sin  
And perseverance in ill,  
Doom'd to oblivious Hell,  
To pass with the shames unspoken of men away,  
Wash'd out with their tombs by the grey un pitying tears of  
Heaven.

But ye, dear Youth, who lightly in the day of fury  
Put on England's glory as a common coat,  
And in your stature of masking grace  
Stood forth warriors complete,  
No praise o'ershadoweth yours to-day,  
Walking out of the home of love  
To match the deeds of all the dead.—  
Alas ! alas ! fair Peace,  
These were thy blossoming roses.  
Look on thy shame, fair Peace, thy tearful shame !  
Turn to thine isle, fair Peace ; return thou and guard it well !



## *October and other Poems*

14

### THE CHIVALRY OF THE SEA

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES FISHER, LATE  
STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, LOST  
IN THE 'INVINCIBLE'.

OVER the warring waters, beneath the wandering skies  
The heart of Britain roameth, the Chivalry of the sea,  
Where Spring never bringeth a flower, nor bird singeth in  
a tree ;

Far, afar, O beloved, beyond the sight of our eyes,  
Over the warring waters, beneath the stormy skies.

Staunch and valiant-hearted, to whom our toil were play,  
Ye man with armour'd patience the bulwarks night and day,  
Or on your iron coursers plough shuddering through the  
Bay,

Or neath the deluge drive the skirmishing sharks of war :  
Venturous boys who leapt on the pinnace and row'd from  
shore,

A mother's tear in the eye, a swift farewell to say,  
And a great glory at heart that none can take away.

Seldom is your home-coming ; for aye your pennon flies  
In unrecorded exploits on the tumultuous wave ;  
Till, in the storm of battle, fast-thundering upon the foe,  
Ye add your kindred names to the heroes of long-ago,  
And mid the blasting wrack, in the glad sudden death of  
the brave,

Ye are gone to return no more.—Idly our tears arise ;  
Too proud for praise as ye lie in your unvisited grave,  
The wide-warring water, under the starry skies.

## *October and other Poems*

15

FOR 'PAGES INÉDITES', ETC.

*April, 1916.*

By our dear sons' graves, fair France, thou'rt now to us  
    endear'd ;  
    Since no more as of old stand th' English against thee  
    in fight,  
But rallying to defend thee they die guarding thy beauty  
    From blind envious Hate and Perfidy leagued with  
    Might.

16

### GHELUVELT

EPITAPH ON THE WORCESTERS. OCTOBER 31, 1914.

Askest thou of these graves? They'll tell thee, O stranger,  
    in England  
How we Worcesters lie where we redeem'd the battle.

17

### THE WEST FRONT

AN ENGLISH MOTHER, ON LOOKING INTO MASEFIELD'S  
    'OLD FRONT LINE'.

No country know I so well  
    as this landscape of hell.  
Why bring you to my pain  
    these shadow'd effigys  
Of barb'd wire, riven trees,  
    the corpse-strewn blasted plain?

And the names—Hebuterne  
    Bethune and La Bassée—

( 491 )

## *October and other Poems*

I have nothing to learn—  
Contalmaison, Boisselle,  
And one where night and day  
my heart would pray and dwell ;

A desert sanctuary,  
where in holy vigil  
Year-long I have held my faith  
against th' imaginings  
Of horror and agony  
in an ordeal above

The tears of suffering  
and took aid of angels :  
This was the temple of God :  
no mortuary of kings  
Ever gathered the spoils  
of such chivalry and love :

No pilgrim shrine soe'er  
hath assembled such prayer—  
With rich incense-wafted  
ritual and requiem  
Not beauteous batter'd Rheims  
nor lorn Jerusalem.

18

### TRAFALGAR SQUARE

*September, 1917.*

FOOL that I was : my heart was sore,  
Yea sick for the myriad wounded men,  
The maim'd in the war : I had grief for each one :  
And I came in the gay September sun  
To the open smile of Trafalgar Square ;  
Where many a lad with a limb fordone

## October and other Poems

Loll'd by the lion-guarded column  
That holdeth Nelson statued thereon  
Upright in the air.

The Parliament towers and the Abbey towers,  
The white Horseguards and grey Whitehall,  
He looketh on all,  
Past Somerset House and the river's bend  
To the pillar'd dome of St. Paul,  
That slumbers confessing God's solemn blessing  
On England's glory, to keep it ours—  
While children true her prowess renew  
And throng from the ends of the earth to defend  
Freedom and honour—till Earth shall end.

The gentle unjealous Shakespeare, I trow,  
In his country tomb of peaceful fame,  
Must feel exiled from life and glow  
If he think of this man with his warrior claim,  
Who looketh o'er London as if 'twere his own,  
As he standeth in stone, aloft and alone,  
Sailing the sky with one arm and one eye.

19

### CHRISTMAS EVE, 1917

MANY happy returns, sweet Babe, of the day !  
Didst not thou sow good seed in the world, thy field ?  
Cam'st thou to save the poor ? Thy poor yet pine.  
Thousands to-day suffer death-pangs like thine ;  
Our jewels of life are spilt on the ground as dross ;  
Ten thousand mothers stand beneath the cross.  
*Peace to men of goodwill* was the angels' song :  
Now there is fiercer war, worse filth and wrong.  
If thou didst sow good seed, is this the yield ?  
Shall not thy folk be quell'd in dead dismay ?

## *October and other Poems*

Nay, with a larger hope we are fed and heal'd  
Than e'er was reveal'd to the saints who died so strong ;  
For while men slept the seed had quicken'd unseen.  
England is as a field whereon the corn is green.

Of trial and dark tribulation this vision is born—  
Britain as a field green with the springing corn.  
While we slumber'd the seed was growing unseen.  
Happy returns of the day, dear Babe, we say.

ENGLAND has buried her sins with her fathers' bones.  
Thou shalt be throned on the ruin of kingly thrones.  
The wish of thine heart is rooted in carnal mind ;  
For good seed didst thou sow in the world thy field :  
It shall ripen in gold and harvest an hundredfold.  
Peace shall come as a flood upon all mankind ;  
Love shall comfort and succour the poor that are pined.

Wherever our gentle children are wander'd and sped,  
Simple apostles thine of the world to come,  
They carried the living seed of the living Bread,  
The angel-song and the gospel of Christendom,  
That while the nation slept was springing unseen.

So tho' we be sorely stricken we feel no dread :  
Our thousand sons suffer death-pangs like thine :  
It shall ripen in gold and harvest an hundredfold :  
Peace and Love shall hallow our care and teen,  
Shall bind in fellowship all the folk of the earth  
To kneel at thy cradle, Babe, and bless thy birth.

Ring we the bells up and down in country and town,  
And keep the old feast unholpen of preacher or priest,  
Wishing thee happy returns, and thy Mother May,  
Ever happier and happier returns, dear CHRIST, of thy day !

## *October and other Poems*

20

### THE EXCELLENT WAY

MAN's mind that hath this earth for home  
Hath too its far-spread starry dome  
Where thought is lost in going free,  
Prison'd but by infinity.  
He first in slumbrous babyhood  
Took conscience of his heavenly good ;  
Then with his sins grown up to youth  
Wept at the vision of God's truth.

Soon in his heart new hopes awoke  
As poet sang or prophet spoke :  
Temples arose and stone he taught  
To stand agaze in tranced thought :  
He won the trembling air to tell  
Of far passions ineffable,  
Feeding the hungry things of sense  
With instincts of omniscience,  
Immortal modes that should abide  
Cherish'd by love and pious pride,  
That unborn children might inherit  
The triumph of his holy spirit,  
Outbidding Nature, to entice  
Her soul from her own Paradise,  
Till her wild face had fallen to shame  
Had he not praised her in God's name

Glorying on thy peaceful throne :—  
Can thy love thy sins atone ?  
What shall dreams of glory serve,  
If thy sloth thy doom deserve,  
When the strong relentless foe  
Storm thy gates to lay thee low ?

## *October and other Poems*

With woes of pestilence and war,  
Siva and Moloch, Odin and Thor,  
Rise from their graves to greet amain  
The deeds that give them life again.

Poor man, sunk deeper than thy slime  
In blood and hate, in terror and crime,  
Thou who wert lifted on the wings  
Of thy desire, the king of kings,  
In promise beyond ken sublime :  
O thou man-soul, who mightest climb  
To heavenly happiness, whereof  
Thine easy path were Mirth and Love !

*October, 1918.*

21

### ENGLAND TO INDIA

*Christmas, 1918.*

BEAUTIFUL is man's home : how fair,  
Wrapt in her robe of azurous air,  
The Earth thro' stress of ice and fire  
Came on the path of God's desire,  
Redeeming Chaos, to compose  
Exquisite forms of lily and rose,  
With every creature a design  
Of loveliness or craft divine  
Searchable and unsearchable,  
And each insect a miracle !

---

and at thy cradle, Babe, and bless thy birth.—

we the bells up and down in country and town,  
up the old feast unholpen of preacher or priest,  
thee happy returns, and thy Mother May,  
deeper and happier returns, dear CHRIST, of thy d

## *October and other Poems*

China and Ind, Hellas or France,  
Each hath its own inheritance ;  
And each to Truth's rich market brings  
Its bright divine imaginings,  
In rival tribute to surprise  
The world with native merchandise.

Nor least in worth nor last in years  
Of artists, poets, saints and seers,  
England, in her far northern sea,  
Fashion'd the jewel of Liberty,  
Fetch'd from the shore of Palestine  
(Land of the Lily and mystic Vine).  
Where once in the everlasting dawn  
Christ's Love-star flamed, that heavenly sign  
Whereto all nations shall be drawn,  
Unfabled Magi, and uplift  
Each to Love's cradle his own gift.

Thou who canst dream and understand,  
Dost thou not dream for thine own land  
This dream of Truth, and contemplate  
That happier world, Love's free Estate ?

Say, didst thou dream, O Sister fair,  
How hand in hand we entered there ?

### 22

#### BRITANNIA VICTRIX

CARELESS wast thou in thy pride,  
Queen of seas and countries wide,  
Glorying on thy peaceful throne :—  
Can thy love thy sins atone ?  
What shall dreams of glory serve,  
If thy sloth thy doom deserve,  
When the strong relentless foe  
Storm thy gates to lay thee low ?



## *October and other Poems*

Careless, ah ! he saw thee leap  
Mighty from thy startled sleep,  
Heard afar thy challenge ring :  
'Twas the world's awakening.

Welcome to thy children all  
Rallying to thee without call  
Oversea, the sportive sons  
From thy vast dominions !  
Stern in onset or defence,  
Terrible in their confidence.

Dauntless wast thou, fair goddess,  
'Neath the cloud of thy distress ;  
Fierce and mirthful wast thou seen  
In thy toil and in thy teen ;  
While the nations looked to thee,  
Spent in worldwide agony.

Oft, throughout that long ordeal  
Dark with horror-stricken duty,  
Nature on thy heart would steal  
Beckoning thee with heavenly beauty,  
Heightening ever on thine isle  
All her seasons' tranquil smile ;  
Till thy soul anew converted,  
Roaming o'er the fields deserted,  
By thy sorrow sanctified,  
Found a place wherein to hide.

Soon fresh beauty lit thy face,  
Then thou stood'st in Heaven's high grace :  
Sudden in air on land and sea  
Swell'd the voice of victory.

Now when jubilant bells resound  
And thy sons come laurel-crown'd,

## *October and other Poems*

After all thy years of woe  
Thou no longer canst forgo,  
Now thy tears are loos'd to flow.

Land, dear land, whose sea-built shore  
Nurseth warriors evermore,  
Land, whence Freedom far and lone  
Round the earth her speech has thrown  
Like a planet's luminous zone,—  
In thy strength and calm defiance  
Hold mankind in love's alliance !

Beauteous art thou, but the foes  
Of thy beauty are not those  
Who lie tangled and dismay'd  
Fearless one, be yet afraid  
Lest thyself thyself condemn  
In the wrong that ruin'd them.

God, who chose thee and upraised  
'Mong the folk (His name be praised !),  
Proved thee then by chastisement  
Worthy of His high intent,  
Who, because thou could'st endure,  
Saved thee free and purged thee pure,  
Won thee thus His grace to win,  
For thy love forgave thy sin,  
For thy truth forgave thy pride;  
Queen of seas and countries wide,—  
He who led thee still will guide.

Hark ! thy sons, those spirits fresh  
Dearly housed in dazzling flesh,  
Thy full brightening buds of strength  
Ere their day had any length  
Crush'd, and fallen in torment sorest,  
Hark ! the sons whom thou deplorest

## October and other Poems

Call—I hear one call ; he saith :  
‘Mother, weep not for my death :  
’Twas to guard our home from hell,  
’Twas to make thy joy I fell  
Praising God, and all is well.  
What if now thy heart should quail  
And in peace our victory fail !  
If low greed in guise of right  
Should consume thy gather’d might,  
And thy power mankind to save  
Fall and perish on our grave !  
On my grave, whose legend be  
*Fought with the brave and joyfully*  
*Died in faith of victory.*  
Follow on the way we won !  
Thou hast found, not lost thy son.’

November 23, 1918.

### 23

#### POOR CHILD

ON a mournful day  
When my heart was lonely,  
O’er and o’er my thought  
Conned but one thing only,

Thinking how I lost  
Wand’ring in the wild-wood  
The companion self  
Of my careless childhood.

How, poor child, it was  
I shall ne’er discover,  
But ’twas just when he  
Grew to be thy lover,

## *October and other Poems*

With thine eyes of trust  
And thy mirth, whereunder  
All the world's hope lay  
In thy heart of wonder.

Now, beyond regrets  
And faint memories of thee,  
Saddest is, poor child,  
That I cannot love thee.

24

### TO PERCY BUCK

FOLK alien to the Muse have hemm'd us round  
And fiends have suck'd our blood : our best delight  
Is poison'd, and the year's infective blight  
Hath made almost a silence of sweet sound.

But you, what fortune, Percy, have you found  
At Harrow ? doth fair hope your toil requite ?  
Doth beauty win her praise and truth her right,  
Or hath the good seed fal'n on stony ground ?

Ply the art ever nobly, single-soul'd  
Like Brahms, or as you ruled in Wells erewhile,  
—Nor yet the memory of that zeal is cold—  
Where lately I, who love the purer style,  
Enter'd, and felt your spirit as of old  
Beside me, listening in the chancel-aisle.

1904.

25

### TO HARRY ELLIS WOOLDRIDGE

LOVE and the Muse have left their home, now bare  
Of memorable beauty, all is gone,  
The dedicated charm of Yattendon,  
Which thou wert apt, dear Hal, to build and share.

( 501 )

## *October and other Poems*

What noble shades are flitting, who while-ere  
Haunted the ivy'd walls, where time ran on  
In sanctities of joy by reverence won,  
Music and choral grace and studies fair !

These on some kindlier field may Fate restore,  
And may the old house prosper, dispossess  
Of her whose equal it can nevermore

Hold till it crumble : O nay ! and the door  
Will moulder ere it open on a guest  
To match thee in thy wisdom and thy jest.

*October, 1905.*

### 26

#### FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun  
I have toil'd as I might  
I have thought as I would  
And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep  
My heart of content  
For friends that I met  
The way that I went.

I welcome fatigue  
While frenzy and care  
Like thin summer clouds  
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may  
And awake when I will  
With the song of the birds  
And the sun on the hill.

## *October and other Poems*

Or death—were it death—  
To what should I wake  
Who loved in my home  
All life for its sake?

What good have I wrought?  
I laugh to have learned  
That joy cannot come  
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot  
Than God giveth me  
It never hath been  
Nor ever shall be.

### 27

#### DEMOCRITUS

Joy of your opulent atoms! wouldst thou dare  
Say that Thought also of atoms self-became,  
Waving to soul as light had the eye in aim;  
And so with things of bodily sense compare  
Those native notions that the heavens declare,  
Space and Time, Beauty and God—Praise we his name!—  
Real ideas, that on tongues of flame  
From out mind's cooling paste leapt unaware?

Thy spirit, Democritus, orb'd in the eterne  
Illimitable galaxy of night  
Shineth undimm'd where greater splendours burn  
Of sage and poet: by their influence bright  
We are held; and pouring from his quenchless urn  
Christ with immortal love-beams laves the height.

1919.



# NEW VERSE

*written in*

1921

*with the other poems of that year  
& a few earlier pieces*





## PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

1. *In an illustrated Album.* 1924.
2. *On a 4to sheet with Preface, notes, and references, for private circulation.* June 1923.
6. *The Queen; 'Elizabethan' number,* July 1923.
7. *London Mercury,* Nov. 1924.
8. *London Mercury,* July 1923.
10. *Tale Review,* July 1923; and contemporaneously, with a translation into Greek Elegiacs by Francis Pember, in the *Nineteenth Century.*
11. *London Mercury,* June 1923.
13. *Cornhill,* August 1923.
18. *Some War Album.*
25. *Subscribed to a Keats memorial volume.*
- 1-7. THE TAPESTRY. *Privately printed by F.W. and S.M.* Nov. 1925.
- 1-25. NEW VERSE. *Clarendon Press, Oxford,* 1926. See *Preface to that book.*

*All the poems not specially dated at the foot were written in 1921.*

# NEW VERSE

## *PART ONE*

### *NEO-MILTONIC SYLLABICS*

#### I

#### CHEDDAR PINKS

MID the squander'd colour  
idling as I lay  
Reading the Odyssey  
in my rock-garden  
I espied the cluster'd  
tufts of Cheddar pinks  
Burgeoning with promise  
of their scented bloom  
All the modish motley  
of their bloom to-be  
Thrust up in narrow buds  
on the slender stalks  
Thronging springing urgent  
hasting (so I thought)  
As if they feared to be  
too late for summer—  
Like schoolgirls overslept  
waken'd by the bell  
Leaping from bed to don  
their muslin dresses  
On a May morning:

Then felt I like to one  
indulging in sin  
(Whereto Nature is oft  
a blind accomplice)

## *New Verse*

Because my aged bones  
so enjoyed the sun  
There as I lay along  
idling with my thoughts  
Reading an old poet  
while the busy world  
Toil'd moil'd fuss'd and scurried  
worried bought and sold  
Plotted stole and quarrel'd  
fought and God knows what.  
I had forgotten Homer  
dallying with my thoughts  
Till I fell to making  
these little verses  
Communing with the flowers  
in my rock-garden  
On a May morning.

### 2

## POOR POLL

I SAW it all, Polly, how when you had call'd for sop  
and your good friend the cook came & fill'd up your pan  
you yerk'd it out deftly by beakfuls scattering it  
away far as you might upon the sunny lawn  
then summon'd with loud cry the little garden birds  
to take their feast. Quickly came they flustering around  
Ruddock & Merle & Finch squabbling among themselves  
nor gave you thanks nor heed while you sat silently  
watching, and I beside you in perplexity  
lost in the maze of all mystery and all knowledge 10  
felt how deep lieth the fount of man's benevolence  
if a bird can share it & take pleasure in it.

If you, my bird, I thought, had a philosophy  
it might be a sounder scheme than what our moralists

## New Verse

propound : because thou, Poll, livest in the darkness  
which human Reason searching from outside would pierce,  
but, being of so feeble a candle-power, can only  
show up to view the cloud that it illuminates.

Thus reason'd I : then marvell'd how you can adapt  
your wild bird-mood to endure your tame environment 20  
the domesticities of English household life  
and your small brass-wire cabin, who sh<sup>d</sup>st live on wing  
harrying the tropical branch-flowering wilderness :

Yet Nature gave you a gift of easy mimicry  
whereby you have come to win uncanny sympathies  
and morsell'd utterance of our Germanic talk  
as schoolmasters in Greek will flaunt their hackney'd tags

φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν and κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί,

ἡ γλῶσσ' ὁμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρενὶν ἀνώμοτος

tho' you with a better ear copy ús more perfectly 30

nor without connotation as when you call'd for sop  
all with that stumpy wooden tongue & vicious beak  
that dry whistling shrieking tearing cutting pincer  
now eagerly subservient to your cautious claws  
exploring all varieties of attitude

in irrepressible blind groping for escape

—a very figure & image of man's soul on earth

the almighty cosmic Will fidgiting in a trap—

in your quenchless unknown desire for the unknown life  
of which some homely British sailor robb'd you, alas ! 40

'Tis all that doth your silly thoughts so busy keep  
the while you sit moping like Patience on a perch

—*Wie viele Tag' und Nächte bist du geblieben!*

*La possa delle gambe posta in tregue—*

the impeccable spruceness of your grey-feather'd pòll  
a model in hairdressing for the dandiest old Duke  
enough to qualify you for the House of Lords  
or the Athenaeum Club, to poke among the nob  
great intellectual nob and literary nob  
scientific nob and Bishops *ex officio* : 50

## New Verse

nor lack you simulation of profoundest wisdom  
such as men's features oft acquire in very old age  
by mere cooling of passion & decay of muscle  
by faint renunciation even of untold regrets ;  
who seeing themselves a picture of that wh: man should-be  
learn almost what it were to be what they are-not.  
But you can never have cherish'd a determined hope  
consciously to renounce or lose it, you will live  
your threescore years & ten idle and puzzle-headed  
as any mumping monk in his unfurnish'd cell 60  
in peace that, poor Polly, passeth Understanding—  
merely because you lack what we men understand  
by Understanding. Well ! well ! that's the difference  
*C'est la seule différence, mais c'est important.*

Ah ! your pale sedentary life ! but would you change ?  
exchange it for one crowded hour of glorious life,  
one blind furious tussle with a madden'd monkey  
who would throttle you and throw your crude fragments away  
shreds unintelligible of an unmeaning act  
*dans la profonde horreur de l'éternelle nuit ?* 70

Why ask ? You cannot know. 'Twas by no choice of yours  
that you mischanged for monkeys' man's society,  
'twas that British sailor drove you from Paradise—  
*Εἶθ' ὦφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτᾶσθαι σκάφος !*  
I'd hold embargoes on such a ghastly traffic.

I am writing verses to you & grieve that you sh<sup>d</sup> be  
*absolument incapable de les comprendre,*  
*Tu, Polle, nescis ista nec potes scire :—*

Alas ! Iambic, scazon and alexandrine,  
spondee or choriamb, all is alike to you— 80  
my well-continued fanciful experiment  
wherein so many strange verses amalgamate  
on the secure bedrock of Milton's prosody :  
not but that when I speak you will incline an ear  
in critical attention lest by chance I might  
possibly say something that was worth repeating :

## New Verse

I am adding (do you think?) pages to literature  
that gouty excrement of human intellect  
accumulating slowly & everlastingly  
depositing, like guano on the Peruvian shore, 90  
to be perhaps exhumed in some remotest age  
(*piis secunda, vate me, detur fuga*)  
to fertilize the scanty dwarf'd intelligence  
of a new race of beings the unhallow'd offspring  
of them who shall have quite dismember'd & destroy'd  
our temple of Christian faith & fair Hellenic art  
just as that monkey would, poor Polly, have done for you.

### 3

## THE TAPESTRY

*'Sequel to the foregoing' W. IV.*

'THESE tapestries have hung fading around my hail  
centuries long ; their old-fashion'd mythology  
infects the fresh and young with blighting influence  
like Abram there with knife and faggot standing stark  
to slay his son. I'm vow'd I'll have no more of them.  
Turn me them outside-in, their faces to the wall,  
so shall we have more colour and less solemnity.'—

Thusthe young heir & lord enjoin'd his wondering steward  
who obey'd, and many a guest was bidden, and at the feast  
the wine flow'd free with fine hubbub and merriment. 10

My tale is but a fable of God's fair tapestry  
the decorated room wherein my spirit hath dwelt  
from infancy a nursling of great Nature's beauty  
which keepeth fresh my wonder as when I was a child.  
Such is the joy of the eye, that dark conduit whereby

## New Verse

the swift creative ray, offspring of heavenly fire,  
steals to the mind, wakening in her secret chamber  
vast potencies of thought which there lie slumbering  
in the image of God. Ah! had I not heard and seen  
today, when at my window a meryl sat fluting 20  
his happy canticle to hail the sun's uprise?

Then looked I forth and lo! The Elysian fields of Dawn!  
and there in naked peace my dumb expectancy  
mirror'd above the hills, a pageant like music  
heard in imagination or the silence of dreams.  
What if I had not seen the cloths of Night take hue  
soft-tinged as of brown bear-skin on green opal spread  
which still persisting through shift imperceptible  
grew to an incandescent copper on a pale light-blue!  
Then one flame-yellow streak pierced thru' the molten  
bronze 30

with lilac freak'd above, where fiery in red mist  
the orb with slow surprise surged, till his whole blank blaze  
dispell'd from out his path all colour—and Day began.

Thus ever at every season in every hour and place  
visions await the soul on wide ocean or shore  
mountain forest or garden in wind and floating cloud  
in busy murmur of bees or blithe carol of birds:  
nor is it memoried thought only nor pleased sense  
that holds us, nor whate'er Reason sits puzzling out  
of light or atom, as if—say, the Rainbow's beauty 40  
lay in our skill to fray the Sun's white-tissued ray  
to unravel and measure-off the gaudy threads thereof:  
It is a deeper thrill, the joy that lovers learn  
taking divine instruction from each other's eyes,  
the Truth that all men feel gazing upon the skies  
in constellated Night—O God the Father of Heaven!  
'When I arose and saw the dawn, I sighed for Thee.'

Reckon the backward stretch of Mankind's pedigree  
should it be fifteen thousand generations told  
were that so long to climb from dim selfconsciousness 50

## *New Verse*

up to the eagle aëry of high philosophy?  
to escape from his wild-beast cave in the wilderness  
to till'd plains and safe homes, farms and mansion'd gardens,  
populous wall'd cities, temples and pillar'd schools,  
to dwell in grace, gravity, amity and good manners?  
Was then the first dawning of his savage wonder  
a vain terror to scare him from his aim astray?  
all his prophetic seers, poets, enthusiasts,  
dreamers, artists, adorners, whose meditation  
won to purity of soul in the visions of God, 60  
have guided him on securely and taught him wisely;  
their soul's desire came with man's Reason from Nature,  
transfiguring his sorrows in heroic grace;  
their temples even in ruin reproach his follies  
his science is consecrated by their beauty.

I prop so far my slight fable with argument  
to lay malison and ban on the upstart leprous clan  
who wrong Nature's beauty turning her face about:  
for, certes, hath the goddess also her hinder parts  
which men of all ages have kindly thought to hide: 70  
But as a man, owning a fine cloth of Arras,  
in reverence for his heirloom will examine it all  
inside and out, and learn whether of white wool or silk  
the high-warp, what of silver and gold, how fine the thread,  
what number of graded tints in hatching of the woof;  
so we study Nature, wrong side as well as right  
and in the eternal mystery of God's working find  
full many unsightly a token of beauty's trouble;  
and gain knowledge of Nature and much wisdom thereby:  
but these making no part of beauty's welcome face, 80  
these we turn to the wall, hiding away the mean  
ugly brutish obscene clumsy irrelevances  
which Honesty will own to with baffling humour  
and in heightening the paradox can find pleasure;  
since without such full knowledge can no man have faith  
nor will his thought or picture of life be worth a bean.



## *New Verse*

Now, bean, button, or boterfly, pray accept of me  
for my parrot verses this after apology :  
making experiments in versification  
I wrote them as they came in the mood of the day 90  
whether for good or ill—it was them or nothing.

### 4

#### KATE'S MOTHER

PERCH'D on the upland wheatfields beyond the village end  
a red-brick Windmill stood with black bonnet of wood  
that trimm'd the whirling cross of its great arms around  
upon the wind, pumping up water night and day  
from the deep Kentish chalk to feed a little town  
where miniaturesd afar it huddled on the coast  
its glistening roofs and thrust its short pier in the sea.

Erewhile beside the Mill I had often come and gazed  
across the golden cornland to the purple main  
and distant town, so distant that I could not hear 10  
the barrack bugles but might spy the castle-flag  
a speck of bunting held against the foam-fleck'd waves :  
and luggers in black rank on the high shingle-bank  
drawn up beside the tarr'd huts of the fishermen  
(those channel boatmen famous for courage and skill)  
and ships that in the offing their scatter'd courses fetch'd  
with sunlit sails, or bare-masted outrode the tide :  
'Twas such a scene of bright perspective and brave hues  
as no painter can forge, brushing his greys and blues,  
his madder, vermilion, chrome and ultramarine, 20  
'Twas very England herself as I grew to love her  
—as any manchild loveth looking on beauty—  
England in the peace and delight of her glory,  
beneath the summer sun in the wild-roving wind  
the mighty fans hurtling steadily above me as there  
Nature flooded my heart in unseizable dream :

## *New Verse*

Long ago—when as yet the house where I was born  
was the only home I knew and I no bigger then  
than a mastiff-dog may be, and little of clothing wore  
but shirt and trews and shoes and holland pinafore : 30  
then was my father's garden a fairy realm of tree-  
worship, mimic warfare and ritual savagery  
and past its gates a land of peril and venture lay  
my field of romance the steep beach of the wild sea  
whither might I go wander on high-days for long hours  
tended at every step by a saint, a nurse and mate  
of such loving devotion patience and full trust  
that of all Catharines she hath been my only Kate.

But inland past the Windmill lay a country unknown,  
so that upon the day when I was grown so strong 40  
(to my great pride 'twas told) that I might walk with Kate  
on her half-holiday's accustomed pilgrimage  
to see her old mother who lived across the downs  
in the next combe, it happ'd that I so stirred must be  
that after seventy years I can revive the day.

A blazing afternoon in splendor of mid July  
Kate and my elder sister and I trudged down the street  
past village pond and church, and up the winding lane  
came out beside the windmill on the high cornland 49  
where my new world began. A wheel-worn sunken track  
parted the tilth, deep rugged ruts patch'd here and there  
with broken flints raked in from strewage of the ground,  
baked clay fissured by drought, as splinter'd rock unkind  
to a child's tread, and on either hand the full-grown corn  
rose up a wall above me, where no breeze might come  
nor any more sight thence of the undulating sweep  
of the yellow acres nor of the blue main below.

For difficulty and roughness and scorch of the way  
then a great Bible-thought came on me : I was going  
like the Israelites of old in the desert of Sin, 60  
where forty years long they journey'd in punishment :  
'twas such a treeless plain as this whereon they went,

## *New Verse*

this torrid afternoon under the fiery sun  
might be the forty years ; but I forgot them soon  
picking my way to run on the low skirting banks  
that shelved the fields, anon foraging mid the ranks  
fending the spikey awns off from my cheeks and eyes  
wherever I might espy the larger flowers, and pull'd  
blue Cockle and scarlet Poppy and yellow Marigold  
whose idle blazonry persists to decorate 70  
the mantle of green and gold which man toileth to weave  
for his old grandmother Earth :—with such posies in hand  
we ran bragging to Kate who plodded on the track  
and now with skilful words beguiled us in her train  
warning how far off yet the promised land, and how  
journey so great required our full strength husbanded  
for the return : 'twere wise today to prove our strength  
and walk like men. Whereat we wished most to be wise  
and keeping near beside her heeded closely our steps  
so that our thoughts now wander'd no more from the way  
(O how interminable to me seem'd that way !) 81  
till it fell sloping downwards and we saw the green  
of great elms that uplifted their heads in the combe :  
when for joy of the shade racing ahead we sat  
till Kate again came up with us and led us on  
by shelter'd nooks where among apple and cherry trees  
many a straw-thatcht cottage nestled back from the road.  
A warp'd wicket hidden in a flowery Privet-hedge  
admitted to her mother's along a pebbled path  
between two little squares of crowded garden framed 90  
in high clipt Box, that blent its faint pervading scent  
with fragrant Black-currant, gay Sweet-william and Mint,  
and white Jasmin that hung drooping over the door.  
A bobbin sprang the latch and following Kate we stood  
in shade of a low room with one small window, and there  
facing the meagre light of its lace-curtain'd panes  
a bland silver-hair'd dame clad in a cotton frock  
sat in a rocking chair by an open hearth, whereon

## *New Verse*

a few wood embers smouldering kept a kettle at steam.  
She did not rise, but speaking with soft courtesy 100  
and full respectful pride of her daughter's charges  
gave us kind welcome, bade us sit and be rested  
while Kate prepared the tea. Many strange things the while  
allured me : a lofty clock with loud insistent tick  
beguiled the solemn moments as it doled them out  
picturing upon its face a full-rigg'd ship that rocked  
tossing behind an unmoved billow to and fro :  
beside it a huge batter'd copper warming-pan  
with burnish'd bowl fit for Goliath's giant spoon,  
and crockery whimsies ranged on the high mantel-shelf :  
'twas a storeroom of wonders, but my eyes returned 111  
still to the old dame, she was the greatest wonder of all,  
the wrinkles innumerable of her sallow skin  
her thin voice and the trembling of her patient face  
as there she swayed incessantly on her rocking-chair  
like the ship in the clock : she had sprung into my ken  
wholly to enthrall me, a fresh nucleus of life-surprise  
such as I knew must hold mystery and could reveal :  
for I had observed strange movement of her cotton skirt  
and as she sat with one knee across the other, I saw 120  
how her right foot in the air was all a-tremble and jerked  
in little restless kicks : so when we sat to feast  
about the table spread with tea and cottage cakes  
whenever her eye was off me I watched her furtively  
to make myself assured of all the manner and truth  
of this new thing, and ere we were sent out to play  
(that so Kate might awhile chat with her mother alone)  
I knew the SHAKING PALSY. What follow'd is lost,  
how I chew'd mint-leaves waiting there in the garden  
is my latest remembrance of that July day, 130  
all after is blank, the time like a yesterday's loaf  
is sliced as with a knife, or like as where the sea  
in some diluvian rage swallowing a part of the earth  
left a sheer cliff where erst the unbroken height ran on,

## *New Verse*

and by the rupture has built a landmark seen afar  
—as 'tis at the South Foreland or St. Margaret's bay—  
so memory being broken may stand out more clearly  
as that day's happenings live so freshly by me, and most  
the old widow with her great courtesies and affliction :  
and I love to remember it was to her I made 140  
the first visit of compliment that ever I paid.

### 5

## THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

THE infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,  
a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,  
and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool  
as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.

There is no beauty of love or peace, no joy nor mirth  
but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanc'd  
decketh his sovranty with immortalities.  
Jewels of imagination hath he, purities  
and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God  
plenishing his temples with incense of music 10  
in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ :  
his Destiny is one with the eternal skies : he lieth  
a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth  
inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air  
that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious  
to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.

And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief  
sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he  
will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.  
Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn 20  
whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood !  
See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces

## *New Verse*

how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic  
cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions !  
He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong  
till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find  
his one nobility is but to suffer bravely  
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart :  
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing 30  
basking this summer day under the stately limes  
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,  
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be  
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation  
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment—  
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory  
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell  
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes  
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy  
of their return, Alas ! for how few shall return ! 40  
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death !  
And yet some shall return, and others with them come :  
life will renew ; tho' now none cometh here all day  
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room  
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought,  
and the agèd gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom  
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time  
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart  
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks  
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours— 50  
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels  
punctilious subdivisions of infinity  
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours  
these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass  
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'erthrown—  
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die  
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r  
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.

## *New Verse*

Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill  
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me 60  
the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be  
and me as I am, as reluctant in the stream  
I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn  
among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon  
in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook  
and for animal recreation of hot fatigue  
hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste  
the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh  
and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky  
supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass 70  
until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream  
as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there  
stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones  
blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current  
ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt  
into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

### 6

## THE PSALM

WHILE Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees  
as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,  
the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears  
gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church  
stood to their evening psalm praising God together—  
and when it came to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air  
with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping  
through the responsive figures of a stately dance  
conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array 10  
in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,  
then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew ;

## *New Verse*

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly  
fresh as in springtime when, four centuries ago,  
it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n  
chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots  
standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—  
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd  
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines, 20  
thou wast the unconquerable paean of resolute men  
who fell in coward massacre or with Freedom fled  
from the palatial horror into far lands away,  
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah ! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel  
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold ;  
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them ;  
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail  
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song. 29  
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew !

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint  
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house  
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery  
burst in and search'd but found nor living man nor maid  
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not  
but when it wound to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes  
where unabsolvèd crime yet calleth plagues on France  
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,  
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night 40  
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.  
O evermore great Psalm spring forth ! spring forth anew !



# New Verse

## 7

### COME SE QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!  
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare  
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist  
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle  
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy  
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains  
climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:  
Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought  
and the infinite architecture of our darkness,  
the dim essence and being of our mortalities, 10  
is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity  
whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays.

It happ'd to me sleeping in the Autumn night, what time  
Sirius was uplifting his great lamp o'er the hills,  
I saw him not—my sight was astray, my wonder  
held by the epiphany of a seraphic figure  
that was walking on earth—in my visions it was—  
I saw one in the full form and delight of man,  
the signature of godhead in his motion'd grace, 19  
and the aureole of his head was not dimm'd to my view;  
the shekinah of azure floating o'er him in the air  
seem'd the glow of a fire that burn'd steadfast within  
prison'd to feed the radiance of his countenance;  
as a lighthouse flasheth over broken waters  
a far resistless beam from its strong tower: it was  
as if Nature had deign'd to take back from man's hand  
some work of her own as art had refashion'd it  
—when Giorgione (it might be) portraying the face  
of one who hath left no memory but that picture  
and watching well the features at their play to find 30  
some truth worthy of his skill, caught them for a moment  
transfigured by a phantom visitation of spirit

## *New Verse*

which seizing he drew forth and fix'd on the canvas  
as thence it hath gazed out for ever, and once on me :  
Even such immanent beauty had that heroic face  
and all that look'd on it loved and many worshipp'd.

For me, comfort possess'd me, the intimate comfort  
of Beauty that is the soul's familiar angel  
who bringeth me alway such joy as a man feeleth  
returning to the accustom'd homeliness of home 40  
after long absence or exile among strange things,  
and my heart in me was laughing for happiness—  
when I saw a great fear fell on the worshippers,  
The fear of God : I saw its smoky shadow of dread ;  
and as a vast Plutonian mountain that burieth  
its feet in molten lava and its high peak in heaven,  
whenever it hath decoy'd some dark voyaging storm  
to lave its granite shoulders, dischargeth the flood  
in a thousand torrents o'er its flanks to the plain  
and all the land is vocal with the swirl and gush 50  
of the hurrying waters, so suddenly in this folk  
a flood of troublous passion arose and mock'd control.

Then saw I the light vanities and follies of man  
put on dragonish faces and glour with Gorgon eyes  
disowning Shame and Reason, and one poet I saw  
who from the interdependence and rivalry of men  
loathing his kind had fled into the wilderness  
to wander among the beasts and make home of their caves :  
like to those Asian hermits color'd by their clime  
who drank the infatuation of the wide torrid sand 60  
the whelming tyranny of the lonely sun by day  
the boundless nomadry of the stars by night, who sought  
primeval brotherhood with things unbegotten ;  
who for ultimate comfort clothing them i' the skin  
of nakedness wrapt nothingness closely about them  
choosing want for wealth and shapeless terrors for friends,  
in the embrace of desolation and wearied silence  
to lie babe-like on the bosom of unpyting power.

## *New Verse*

But he found not rest nor peace for his soul : I read  
his turbulent passion, the blasphemy of his heart 70  
as I stood among the rocks that chuckled the cry  
wherewith he upcast reproach into the face of heaven.

‘UNVEIL thine eyes, O THEMIS ! Stand, unveil thine eyes !  
from the high zenith hang thy balance in the skies !  
In one scale set thy Codes of Justice Duty and Awe  
thy penal interdicts the tables of thy Law  
and in the other the postulant plea of Mercy and Love :  
then thine unbandaged sight shall know thy cause how light  
and see thy thankless pan fly back to thee above.

‘Or wilt thou deeper wager, an if thou hast the key 80  
to unlock the cryptic storehouse of futurity,  
fetch the mint-treasure forth, unpack the Final Cause  
whose prime almighty metal must give Reason pause ;  
or if ’tis of such stuff as man’s wit cannot gauge  
scale thou the seal’d deposit in its iron-bound cage  
Nay, lengthen out the beam of the balance on thy side  
unequal as thou wilt, so that on mine the pan  
to hold the thoughts of man be deep enough and wide.

‘What Providence is this that maketh sport with Chance  
blindly staking against things of no ordinance ? 90  
Must the innocent dear birds that singing in the shaw  
with motherly instinct wove their nest of twisted straw  
see in some icy hail-gust their loved mansion drown’d  
and all their callow nurslings batter’d on the ground ?  
Even so a many-generation’d city of men  
the storied temple of their endeavour and amorous ken  
is toss’d back into rubbish by a shudder of the earth’s crust :  
Nor even the eternal stars have any sanction’d trust  
that, like ships in dark night ill-fatedly on their course, 99  
they shall not meet and crash together, and all their force

## New Verse

be churn'd back to the vapory magma whence they grew  
age-long to plod henceforth their frustrate path anew.

' From this blind wreckage then hath Wisdom no escape  
but limitless production of every living shape?  
How shall man honour this Demiurge and yet keep  
in due honour the gift that he rateth so cheap?  
Myriad seeds perfected that one seed may survive—  
Millions of men, that Reason in a scant few may thrive,  
Multiplication alike of good bad strong and weak  
and the overflow of life more wasteful than the leak. 110

' And what this treasure, of which, so prodigal of the whole,  
he granteth unto each pensioner in such niggard dole?  
its short lease on such terms as only can be enjoy'd  
against some equal title invaded or destroy'd?  
What is this banquet where the guests are served for meat?  
What hospitality? What kind of host is he  
the bill of whose purveyance is *Kill ye each other and eat?*

' Or why, if the excellence of conscient Reason is such,  
the accomplishment so high, that it renounce all touch  
of kindness with its kin and humbler parentage 120  
—building the slaughter-house beside the pasturage—  
Why must this last best most miraculous flower of all  
be canker'd at the core, prey to the spawn and spawl  
of meanest moths? must stoop from its divine degree  
to learn the spire and spilth of every insensate filth  
that swarmeth in the chaos of obscenity?

' And if the formless ferment of life's primal slime  
bred without stint, and came through plant and beast in time  
to elaborate the higher appurtenance of sex  
Why should this low-born urgency persist to vex 130  
man's growth in grace? for sure the procreant multitude  
would riot to outcrowd the earth wer't not for lack of food,  
and thus the common welfare serveth but to swell  
the common woe, whereat the starvelings more rebel.

## *New Verse*

See, never hungry horde of savage raiders slipp'd  
from Tartary's parching steppes so for destruction equipp'd  
as midst our crowded luxury now the sneaking swarm  
that pilfereth intelligence from Science to storm  
Civilization in her well-order'd citadel.

Thus Culture doeth herself to death reinforcing hell 140  
& seeth no hope but this, that what she hath wrought in vain  
since it was wrought before, may yet be wrought again  
and fall to a like destruction again and evermore.

'And what Man's Mind ? since even without this foul offence  
it breedeth its own poison of its own excellence :  
it riseth but to fall deeper, it cannot endure.  
Attainment stayeth pursuit and being itself impure  
dispiriteth the soul. All power engendereth pride  
and poor vainglory seeing its image magnified  
upon the ignoble mirror of common thought, will trust 150  
the enticements of self-love and the flattery thereof  
and call on fame to enthrone ambition and mortal lust.

'Wherefore, since Reason assureth neither final term  
nor substantive foundations impeccable and firm  
as brutish instincts are—and Virtue in default  
goeth down before the passions crowding to the assault ;  
Nothing being justified all things are ill or well  
are justifiable alike or unjustifiable  
till, whether in mocking laughter or mere melancholy,  
Philosophy will turn to vindicate folly : 160  
and if thru' thought it came that man first learnt his woe,  
his Memory accumulating the recorded sum  
his Prescience anticipating fresh ills to come,  
How could it be otherwise ? Why should it not be so ?

' And last, O worst ! for surely all wrongs had else been nought  
had never Imagination exalted human thought  
with spiritual affection of tenderness intense

## *New Verse*

beyond all finest delicacy of bodily sense ;  
so that the gift of tears, that is the fount of song  
maketh intolerable agony of Nature's wrong. 170

Ask her that taught man filial love, what she hath done  
the mother of all mothers, she unto her own dear son ?  
him innocently desirous to love her well  
by unmotherly cruelty she hath driven to rebel,  
hath cast out in the night homeless and to his last cry  
for guidance on his way hath deign'd him no reply.

' And thou that in symbolic mockery feign'st to seal  
thine eyes from horrors that thou hast no heart to feel,  
Thou, THEMIS, wilt suspect not the celestial weight  
of the small parcels that I now pile on the plate. 180

These are love's bereavements and the blightings of bloom  
the tears of mourners inconsolable at the tomb  
of promise wither'd and fond hope blasted in prime :  
These, the torrential commiserations of all time  
These, the crime-shrieks of war, plague-groans & famine-cries  
These, the slow-standing tears in children's questioning eyes  
These, profuse tears of fools, These, coy tears of the wise  
in solitude bewailing and in sad silence  
the perishing record of hard-won experience  
Ruin of accomplishment that no toil can restore 190  
Heroic Will chain'd down on Fate's cold dungeon-floor.  
See here the tears of prophets, confessors of faith  
the tears of beauty-lovers, merchants of the unpriced  
in calumny and reproach, in want, wanhope and death  
persecuted betray'd imprison'd sacrificed ;  
All tears from Adam's tears unto the tears of Christ.

' Look to thy balance, THEMIS ; Should thy scale descend  
bind up thine eyes again, I shall no more contend ;  
for if the Final Cause vindicate Nature's laws  
her universal plan giveth no heed to man 200  
No place ; for him Confusion is his Final Cause.'

## *New Verse*

THUS threw he to the wilderness and silent sky  
his outrageous despair the self-pity of mankind  
and the disburdenment of his great heaviness  
left his heart suddenly so shaken and unsteadied  
he seem'd like one who fording a rapid river  
and poising on his head a huge stone that its weight  
may plant his footing firmly and stiffen his body upright  
against the rushing water, hath midway let it fall 209  
and with his burden hath lost his balance, and staggering  
into the bubbling eddy is borne helpless away.  
Even so a stream of natural feeling o'erwhelm'd him  
whether of home maybe and childhood or of lovers' eyes  
of fond friendship and service, or perchance he felt  
himself a rebel untaught who had pilfer'd Wisdom's arms  
to work disorder and havoc in the city of God :  
For suddenly he was dumbstruck and with humbled step  
of unwitting repentance he stole back to his cave  
and wrapping his poor rags about him took his way  
again to his own people and the city whence he had fled.  
There in the market-place a wild haggard figure 221  
I saw him anon where high above a surging crowd  
he stood waving his hands like some prophet of old  
dream-sent to warn God's people ; but them the strong words  
of his chasten'd humanity inflame but the more ;  
forwhy they cannot suffer mention of holiness  
nor the sound of the names that convince them of sin  
If there be any virtue, if there be any praise,  
'tis not for them to hear of or think on those things.  
I saw what he spake to them tho' I heard it not 230  
only at the sting thereof the loud wrath that arose.

As a wild herd of cattle on the prairie pasturing  
if they are aware of one amongst them sick or maim'd  
or in some part freak-hued differently from themselves  
will be moved by instinct of danger and set on him  
and bowing all their heads drive him out with their horns  
as enemy to their selfwill'd community ;

## New Verse

even such brutish instinct impell'd that human herd 238  
and some had stoop'd to gather loose stones from the ground  
and were hurling at him : he crouch'd with both his arms  
covering his head and would have hid himself from them  
in fear more of their crime than of his own peril  
Then with a plunge of terror he turn'd and fled for life  
and they in wild joy of the chase with hue and cry  
broke after him and away and bent on sport to kill  
hunted their startled game before them down the streets.

Awhile he escaped and ran apart, but soon I saw  
the leaders closing on him—I was hiding my eyes  
lest I should see him taken and torn in blood, when, lo !  
the street whereon they ran was block'd across his way 250  
by a white-robed throng that came moving with solemn pace  
waving banners and incense and high chant on the air,  
and bearing 'neath a rich canopy of reverence  
their object of devotion—as oft in papal Rome  
was seen vying with pomps of earthly majesty  
or now on Corpus Christi day thro' Westminster  
in babylonish exile paradeth our roads—  
and as I looked in wonder on the apparition, I saw  
the hunted man into their midst dash'd wildly and fell.

'Twas like as when a fox that long with speed and guile  
hath resolutely outstay'd the yelling murderous pack 261  
if when at last his limbs fail him and he knoweth  
the hounds hot on his trail and himself quite outworn  
will in desperation forgo his native fear  
and run for refuge into some hamlet of men  
and there will enter a cotter's confined cabin and plead  
panting with half-closed eyes to the heart of his foe,  
altho' he knoweth nought of the Divinity  
of that Nature to whom he pleadeth, nor knoweth  
ev'n that he pleadeth, yet he pleadeth not in vain 270  
—so great is Nature—for the good wife hath pity,  
will suffer him to hide there under settle or bed  
until the hunt be pass'd, will cheer him and give him



## *New Verse*

milk of her children's share until he be restor'd  
when she will let him forth to his roguish freedom again—

So now this choral convoy of heavenly pasture  
gave ready succour and harbour to the hunted man  
and silencing their music broke their bright-robed ranks  
to admit him, and again closed round him where fordone  
he fell down in their midst : and hands I saw outstretch'd  
to upraise him, but when he neither rose up nor stirr'd 281  
they knelt aghast, and one, who in solemn haste came up  
and for the splendour of his apparel an elder seem'd,  
bent over him there and whisper'd sacred words, whereat  
he motion'd and gave sign, and offering his dumb mouth  
took from the priestly fingers such food as is dealt  
unto the dying, and when the priest stood up I knew  
by the gesture of his silence that the man was dead.

Then feet and head his body in fair linen winding  
they raised and bore along with dirge and shriving prayer  
such as they use when one of their own brotherhood 291  
after mortal probation has enter'd into rest  
and they will bury his bones where Christ at his coming  
shall bid them all arise from their tombs in the church ;  
Whereto their long procession now went filing back  
threading the streets, and dwarfed beneath the bright façade  
crept with its head to climb the wide steps to the porch  
whereunder, as ever there they arrived, the dark doorway  
swallowed them out of sight : and still the train came on  
with lurching bannerets and tottering canopy 300  
threading the streets and mounting to the shadowy porch  
arriving entering disappearing without end  
when I awoke, the dirge still sounding in my ears  
the night wind blowing thro' the open window upon me  
as I lay marvelling at the riddle of my strange dream.

# *New Verse*

## *PART TWO*

### *ACCENTUAL MEASURES*

#### 8

#### TO FRANCIS JAMMES

'Tis April again in my garden, again the grey stone-wall  
Is pranked with yellow alyssum and lilac aubrey-cresses ;  
Half-hidden the mavis caroleth in the tassely birchen  
tresses

And awhile on the sunny air a cuckoo tuneth his call :  
Now cometh to mind a singer whom country joys enthrall,  
Francis Jammes, so grippeth him Nature in her caresses  
She hath steep'd his throat in the honey'd air of her  
wildernesses

With beauty that countervails the Lutetian therewithal.

You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,  
Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly trousseau—

The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques  
Rousseau,

Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,  
Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson  
Crusoe,

And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

#### 9

#### MELANCHOLY

'Twas mid of the moon but the night was dark with rain,  
Drops lashed the pane, the wind howl'd under the door ;  
For me, my heart heard nought but the cannon-roar

## *New Verse*

On fields of war, where Hell was raging amain :  
My heart was sore for the slain :—  
As when on an Autumn plain the storm lays low the wheat,  
So fell the flower of England, her golden grain,  
Her harvesting hope trodden under the feet  
Of Moloch, Woden and Thor,  
And the lovingkindness of Christ held in disdain. 10

My heart gave way to the strain, renouncing more & more ;  
Its bloodstream fainted down to the slothful weary beat  
Of the age-long moment, that swelleth where ages meet,  
Marking time 'twixt dark Hereafter and Long-before ;  
Which greet awhile and awhile, again to retreat ;  
The Never-the-same repeating again and again,  
Completing itself in monotony incomplete,  
A wash of beauty and horror in shadows that fleet,  
Always the Never-the-same still to repeat,  
The devouring glide of a dream that keepeth no store. 20

Meseem'd I stood on the flats of a waveless shore,  
Where MELANCHOLY unrobed of her earthly weeds,  
Haunteth in naked beauty without stain ;  
In reconcilment of Death, and Vanity of all needs ;  
A melting of life in oblivion of all deeds ;  
No other beauty nor passion nor love nor lore ;  
No other goddess abideth for man to adore ;  
All things remaining nowhere with nought to remain ;  
The consummation of thought in nought to attain.

I had come myself to that ultimate Ocean-shore, 30  
Like Labourer Love when his life-day is o'er,  
Who home returning fatigued is fain to regain  
The house where he was unconsciously born of yore ;  
Stumbling on the threshold he sinketh down on the floor ;  
Half-hearteth a prayer as he lieth, and nothing heeds,  
If only he sleep and sleep and have rest for evermore.

# *New Verse*

## *PART THREE*

### *OLD STYLES*

#### IO

#### BUCH DER LIEDER

BE these the selfsame verses  
That once when I was young  
Charm'd me with dancing magic  
To love their foreign tongue,

Delicate buds of passion,  
Gems of a master's art,  
That broke forth rivalling Nature  
In love-songs of the heart ;

Like fresh leaves of the woodland  
Whose trembling screens would house  
The wanton birdies courting  
Upon the springing boughs ?

Alas, how now they are wither'd !  
And fallen from the skies  
In yellowy tawny crumple  
Their tender wreckage lies,

And all their ravisht beauty  
Strewn 'neath my feet to-day  
Rustles as I go striding  
Upon my wintry way.

# New Verse

II

EMILY BRONTË

*'Du hast Diamanten'*

THOU hadst all Passion's splendor,  
Thou hadst abounding store  
Of heaven's eternal jewels,  
Belovèd ; what wouldst thou more ?

Thine was the frolic freedom  
Of creatures coy and wild,  
The melancholy of wisdom,  
The innocence of a child,

The mail'd will of the warrior,  
That buckled in thy breast  
Humility as of Francis,  
The self-surrender of Christ ;

And of God's cup thou drankest  
The unmingled wine of Love,  
Which makes poor mortals giddy  
When they but sip thereof.

What was't to thee thy pathway  
So rugged mean and hard,  
Whereon when Death surprised thee  
Thou gav'st him no regard ?

What was't to thee, enamour'd  
As a red rose of the sun,  
If of thy myriad lovers  
Thou never sawest one ?

Nor if of all thy lovers  
That are and were to be  
None ever had their vision,  
O belovèd, of thee,

## *New Verse*

Until thy silent glory  
Went forth from earth alone,  
Where like a star thou gleamest  
From thine immortal throne.

12

### THE TRAMPS

A SCHOOLBOY lay one night a-bed  
Under his window wide,  
When dusk is lovelier than day  
In the high summertide ;

The jasmin neath the casement throng'd  
Its ivory stars abloom ;  
With freaking peas and mignonette  
Their perfume fill'd the room :

Across the garden and beyond  
He look'd out on the skies,  
And through black elmen boughs afar  
Watch'd where the moon should rise :

A warm rain fed the thirsty earth,  
Drops patter'd from the eaves  
And from the tall trees as the shower  
Fell lispig on their leaves :

His heart was full, and pleasant thoughts  
Made music in his mind,  
Like separate songs of birds, that are  
By general joy combined.

It seem'd the hour had gather'd up  
For every sense a bliss  
To crown the faith of all desire  
With one assuaging kiss ;

## *New Verse*

So that he fought with sleep to hold  
The rapture while he might,  
Lest it should sink and drowning die  
Into the blank of night ;

Nor kenn'd it was no passing thing  
Nor ever should be pass'd  
But with him bide a joy to be  
As long as Life should last.

For though young thoughts be quite forgone,  
The pleasure of their dream  
Can mesh them in its living mood  
And draw them in the stream :

So I can fancy when I will  
That there I lie intent  
To hear the gentle whispering rain  
And drink the jasmin scent :

And then there sounds a distant tread  
Of men, that night who strode  
Along the highway step by step  
Approaching down the road,

A company of three or four  
That hastening home again  
After a Sabbath holiday  
Came talking in the rain :

Aloof from all my world and me  
They pass aneath the wall,  
Till voice and footstep die away  
And into silence fall :

Into the maze of my delight  
Those blind intruders walk :  
And ever I wonder who they be  
And of what things they talk.

## *New Verse*

13

### THE GREAT ELM

FROM a friend's house had I gone forth,  
And wandering at will  
O'er a wide country West and North  
Without or vale or hill,  
I came beneath the broken edge  
Of higher sloping ground,  
Where an old Giant from the ledge  
O'erlook'd the landscape round :

A towering Elm that stood alone,  
Last of an ancient rank,  
And had great barky roots out-thrown  
To buttress up the bank ;  
His rough trunk of two hundred years  
In girth a pillar gave  
As massive as the Norman piers  
That rise in Durham's nave ;

But this for stony roof and wall  
Upliving timber held,  
Where never in its forest tall  
Had woodman lopp'd or fell'd :  
Above its crown no wind so fierce  
Had warp'd the shapely green,  
And scarce with bated breath might pierce  
Its caves of leafy screen.

It seem'd in that dark foliage laid  
Suspended thought must dwell ;  
As in those boughs that overshade  
The river-sides of Hell,  
That fabled Elm of Acheron,  
Within the gates of death,



## *New Verse*

I knew what sudden wonder  
I brought her in my flight ;  
what rapturous joy possess'd her,  
what peace and soft delight.

### 15

#### VISION

How should I be to Love unjust  
Since Love hath been so kind to me ?  
O how forget thy tender trust  
Or slight the bond that set me free ?  
How should thy spirit's blithe embrace,  
Thy loyalty, have been given in vain,  
From the first beckoning of thy grace  
That made a child of me again,  
And since hath still my manhood led  
Through scathe and trouble hour by hour,  
And in probation perfected  
The explicit fruit of such a flower ?

Not ev'n the Apostles, in the days  
They walked with Christ, lov'd him so well  
As we may now, who ken his praise  
Reading the story that they tell,  
Writ by them when their vision grew  
And he, who fled and thrice denied  
Christ to his face, was proven true  
And gladly for His memory died :  
So strong the Vision, there was none  
O'er whom the Fisher's net was cast,  
Ev'n of the fearfulest not one  
Who would have left Him at the last.

So 'tis with me ; the time hath clear'd  
Not dull'd my loving : I can see

## *New Verse*

Love's passing ecstasies endear'd  
In aspects of eternity :  
I am like a miser—I can say  
That having hoarded all my gold  
I must grow richer every day  
And die possess'd of wealth untold.

### 16

#### LOW BAROMETER

THE south-wind strengthens to a gale,  
Across the moon the clouds fly fast,  
The house is smitten as with a flail,  
The chimney shudders to the blast.

On such a night, when Air has loosed  
Its guardian grasp on blood and brain,  
Old terrors then of god or ghost  
Creep from their caves to life again ;

And Reason kens he herits in  
A haunted house. Tenants unknown  
Assert their squalid lease of sin  
With earlier title than his own.

Unbodied presences, the pack'd  
Pollution and remorse of Time,  
Slipp'd from oblivion reënact  
The horrors of unhouseld crime.

Some men would quell the thing with prayer  
Whose sightless footsteps pad the floor,  
Whose fearful trespass mounts the stair  
Or bursts the lock'd forbidden door.

## *New Verse*

Some have seen corpses long interr'd  
Escape from hallowing control,  
Pale charnel forms—nay ev'n have heard  
The shrilling of a troubled soul,

That wanders till the dawn hath cross'd  
The dolorous dark, or Earth hath wound  
Closer her storm-spredd cloke, and thrust  
The baleful phantoms underground

### 17

#### A DREAM

I HAD come in front of a building and knew  
I should enter : the gates were barr'd,  
but a postern was open, and I push'd through  
and stood in a wide courtyard.

'Twas built, as colleges are, four-square,  
though arch and colonnade  
all here were of wood and out of repair,  
timeworn but undecay'd.

Great carven portals in Gothic style,  
when building could save man's soul :  
doors worthy to face a cathedral aisle, -  
or where men-at-arms patrol.

But whether 'twere some old abbey of monks  
with cloister, chapel and cell,  
or a farmstead with pens and stalls and bunks  
for cattle, I could not tell.

There neither were cattle nor men about,  
no cock nor clock gave steven ;  
and I in my dream had never a doubt  
'twas the entry-court of heaven.

## *New Verse*

An old man then appear'd from a door  
and silently moved around ;  
his beard was grisled and thick, and he wore  
a cassock that reach'd the ground ;

Stately his figure and lofty his mien,  
solemn and slow his tread :  
'twas Peter the Saint ; I had often seen  
in pictures his noble head,

Which truly in Guido's painting is shown  
sadden'd and full of force,  
as unconvinced he sits on a stone  
suffering Paul's discourse.

Like any night-watchman he walked along  
peering about on his rounds,  
attentive to see that nothing is wrong,  
no smoke nor thief within bounds ;

Or like a merchant who checks his stores,  
sorting his trusty keys,  
he unlock'd and anon relock'd the doors,  
visiting now those, now these.

Quiet I stood sans hope or fear,  
nor moved to catch his eye,  
nor felt annoy'd when he came quite near  
and pass'd me unnoticed by :

I knew he must know I was there ; the scheme  
of eternity gave us time ;  
so I took whatever might hap in my dream  
as easy as now in my rhyme.

When, as to a prodigal son, from afar  
he approach'd—he had been remiss  
through kindness—he said 'I know who you are :  
you won't get further than this :

## *New Verse*

‘You needn’t be bash’d nor mortified,  
nor fancy you’re laid on the shelf :  
things ain’t as they used to be inside ;  
I don’t go in much myself.’

Then passing away he turn’d again,  
as if to relieve his mind,  
and spoke—if partly he wished to explain,  
I’m sure he will’d to be kind :—

He look’d full glum—it may be a sin  
to repeat his words, as I know it’s  
bad taste—but he said—(He’ll square me the sin):  
‘Why ! what d’you think ? We’ve just took in  
a batch of those French poets.’

## 18

### TO HIS EXCELLENCY

ONE of all our brave commanders,  
Near of kin and dear my friend,  
Led his men in France and Flanders  
From the first brush to the end :

Peril lov’d he, and undaunted  
Sought it out, and thanked his stars  
That to him a place was granted  
In the worst of all the wars.

He brought Uhlans in from Soignies,  
Where the first blood was let out—  
With his remnant from Andregnies  
Saved St. Quentin’s desperate rout.

## *New Verse*

Stiffly fought he through the onset  
Undishearten'd by defeat ;  
Held the rear from dawn to sunset  
Through the long days of retreat.

Times were, to retake the trenches  
He dismounted his dragoons,  
Suck'd his share of gas and stench  
With lieutenants of platoons.

Hit by howitzers and snipers  
He in his five years campaign  
Rode the land from Reims to Wipers,  
On the Marne and on the Aisne.

Many deeds would be to blazon,  
Many fights, to tell them all ;  
Nieuport, Witchet, Contalmaison,  
La Boisselle and Passendaal.

Nothing in his clean vocation  
Vex'd his soul or came amiss,  
From the hurried embarkation  
To the fateful armistice :

But when terms of truce were bruited,  
Then his cheery countenance fell  
In confession undisputed  
That things were not going well :

'Nay (he said), my hope was larger ;  
'Twas not thus I look'd to win :  
I had vow'd to rein my charger  
In the streets of proud Berlin.'

## New Verse

19

*Spoken by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson  
at the opening of the Theatre  
of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art  
by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales,  
May 27, 1921.*

ENGLAND will keep her dearest jewel bright,  
And see her sons like to their sires renown'd ;  
Whose Shakespeare is with deathless Homer crown'd,  
Her freedom the world's hope throned in the height.  
All gifts of spirit are of such airy flight  
That if their fire be spent they fall to ground ;  
Their virtue must with newborn life abound,  
And by young birth renew their old birthright.

We workers therefore in this troublous age  
Would keep our beauty of language from misfeature,  
Presenting manners noble, and mirth unblamed :  
So Truth shall walk majestic on our stage,  
And when we hold the mirror up to Nature,  
She, seeing her face therein, shall not be ashamed.

20

### HODGE

*After reading Maurice Hewlett's 'Song of the Plow'*

COUNTRYMAN HODGE has gone to fight ;  
The girls must help to raise the grain,  
Must fag in the workshops day and night,  
Till Hodge come back to his home again.

## *New Verse*

His life was ever a life of toil  
In snow and frost, in drought or rain ;  
But he is heir and son of the soil  
And Hodge shall come to his own again.

The Norman oppressed him long ago,  
But nought reck'd he of pity or pain,  
He stuck to his work and lay full low  
Till he should come to his own again.

Then Commerce swelled and drove him down ;  
Little he got from all her gain ;  
His boys went off and made the town,  
But Hodge shall come to his own again.

He has waited long and foughten well  
That Peace should smile and Plenty reign ;  
And now, as bygone riddlers tell,  
Hodge shall come to his own again.

'The day when folk shall fly in the air  
And skim like birds above the plain,  
Then shall the plowman have his share  
And Hodge will come to his own again.'

1917.



## *New Verse*

So when joy's cup is brimm'd full up,  
Take no thought o' the morrow :  
So fine's your bliss, ye shall not miss  
To have your turn wi' sorrow.

And she with ruth will teach you truth,  
She is man's very med'cin :  
She'll drive us straight to heav'n's high gate,  
Ay, she can stuff our heads in.

Blush not nor blench with either wench,  
Make neither brag nor pother :  
God send you, son, enough of one  
And not too much o' t'other.

### 22

#### SIMPKIN

THEY tell me Simpkin is a saint  
I've often wish'd he wasn't,  
If 'tis a note of that complaint  
To look so d—d unpleasant.

The world's no doubt a sorry place  
For Simpkin ; and, by Jabez,  
The merest glimpsing of his face  
Will wring and writhe a baby's.

COUNTRYMAN HODGE has gone to fight ;  
The girls must help to raise the grain,  
Must fag in the workshops day and night,  
Till Hodge come back to his home again.

## *New Verse*

But Simpkin, I have heard men state,  
Is kindly and well-meaning ;  
'Tis that his goodness is so great  
It takes so much o' screening.

I would the fiend, that made his skin  
So yellow dry and scurvy,  
Had turn'd the creature outside-in  
Or set him topsy-turvy.

And yet since nothing's made in vain,  
And we must judge our brother  
Unfitted for this world, 'tis plain  
He's fitted for another ;

Where angels glorious to behold  
Shall come, as he supposes,  
To lead him through the streets o' gold  
And crown his head with roses.

And if to Simpkin it befall  
Just as he thinks, so be it !  
I would not grudge the man at all.  
But should not press to see it.

# *New Verse*

## *PART FOUR*

### *STONE'S QUANTITATIVE PROSODY*

23

#### TO CATULLUS

WOULD that you were alive today, Catullus !  
Truth 'tis, there is a filthy skunk amongst us,  
A rank musk-idiot, the filthiest skunk,  
Of no least sorry use on earth, but only  
Fit in fancy to justify the outlay  
Of your most horrible vocabulary.

My Muse, all innocent as Eve in Eden,  
Would yet wear any skins of old pollution  
Rather than celebrate the name detested.  
Ev'n now might he rejoice at our attention,  
Guess'd he this little ode were aiming at him.

O ! were you but alive again, Catullus !

For see, not one among the bards of our time  
With their flimsy tackle was out to strike him ;  
Not those two pretty Laureates of England,  
Not Alfred Tennyson nor Alfred Austin.

1902.

24

#### TO SIR THOS. BARLOW, P.R.C.P.

It's all up I may tell you, good Thomas Barlow,  
The new medicine is wholly broken and done for :  
You must give up Profession and College, Barlow.

( 550 )

## New Verse

Your fine *Address*, man, *on the basis of treatment*,  
So practical so blindly hopeful of progress,  
'Tis but delusion ; all is ended and done for.

For lately Stephen Coleridge in a current Monthly  
Has wittily in a few words the system exploded.  
Better retire and leave the stage, my dear Barlow.

You've been accustom'd in matters of importance  
To look to me to give you earliest tidings ;  
So I devote a penful of little scazons  
To write the dirge of medicine and modern science.

The wonder is how nearly both of us miss'd it :  
Nor would any whisper'd hint of it have ever reach'd me,  
Had not the well-deserving excellent author  
Most kindly frank'd me a copy of his dissertation.

Oct. 1902.

## 25

### ΠΟΙΚΙΛΟΘΡΟΝ'

*Translated from Sappho*

ALL-ADOR'D, all glorious Aphrodita,  
Heavn's goddess mysterious, I beseech thee  
With thy anguish and terror overwhelm not  
My spirit, O queen :

But hither come thou, as, if e'er, aforetime  
Thou to my crying from afar attentive  
Harkenedst, an' out o' the golden archways  
Unto me camest,

## *New Verse*

Harnessing thy fair flutterers, that earthward  
Swiftly drew thee down to the dusky mountains  
Multitudinously winging from unseen

Heights o' the wide air,

And arrivèd, thrice-blessed, I beheld thee  
Smiling on me beautiful and triumphant,  
Heard thee asking of me what had befall'n me,

Why had I call'd thee,

And what I desir'd above all to comfort  
My madden'd heart:—Who is it hath deny'd thee?  
Shall not I subdue the rebel to thy love,

Sapph', an' avenge thee?

. . . . .

Come then, O queen: come to me and release me  
From bitter woe. Stand my ally. The thing that  
My spirit most longs for, accomplish, and win  
Victory with me.

1910.

# TWO PIECES

*written after the war*



*not included*

*in any of the foregoing publications*



*PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS*

1. *Oxford: at the Clarendon Press. 1932, in facsimile.*
2. *The Legion Book. Privately printed, 1929.*

# VERSES WRITTEN FOR MRS. DANIEL

TO

EMILY DANIEL

*In memory of the War-work done in the Provost's Lodgings at Worcester College, Oxford, during the last two years of the War under the presidency of Mrs. Daniel, her fellow-workers beg to offer her with their homage this copy of William Blake's Lyrical Poems as a token of their gratitude for the very pleasant conditions which she provided for their meeting and to record their appreciation of her perpetual kindness and courtesy and cheerful hospitality throughout that sad time, and hereto they sign their names.*

[Here followed 51 signatures.]<sup>1</sup>

AND I am asked for mere variety  
To join my name with this society ;  
For tho' I wasn't rightly in't  
I too hav pasted at a splint  
And after wash'd my hands beslubber'd  
Half-way downstairs i' the' housemaid's cupboard,  
And follow'd others of the meinie  
To sit around the steaming cheney,  
Chatting with apostolic souls  
Noel or Hack or Stuckey Coles, 10  
The soft aroma and effulgence  
Of afternones merged in th' indulgence

<sup>1</sup> [The above dedication and the signatures of the 51 donors followed by the MS. of R. B.'s verses, were bound up with the copy of Blake's Poems which was presented to Mrs. Daniel, April 1919.]



## *Verses written*

Of a spiritual kindly hostess  
(which is what butter on hot toast is),  
In friendship that began maybe  
In eighteen eighty two or three,  
When Daniel printed my PROMETHEVS  
—a thing that others judged beneath use-  
He living then in Worcester House  
Along with many a rat and mouse, 20  
Which multiplying as their manner is  
Had overswarm'd the neighb'ring granaries.

On winter eves when Bodley's bell  
Drove every reader from his cell,  
Betwixt my book and railway-station  
Time found with place accommodation  
There, by his study fire where he  
Mid bursary bills was wont to be ;  
And other friends would end their walk,  
Ere they went home, with tea and talk, 30  
Which, if 'twas bookish, Toby Watson  
Had he stol'n in could put the dots on,  
Half-buried in an easy chair,  
With gentle murmur and modest air  
Fetching out learning with demurrage  
As fearful to disturb his storage.

Or if 'twas summer and tea was laid  
By wicker seats beneath the shade,  
I must pass where in the garden entry  
A monstrous effigy stood sentry, 40  
One of those column-heads which Wren  
Contracted for at two-pound-ten  
To top the wall he built between  
Theatre and road his work to screen,  
Figuring those metaphysic sages  
Whose lucubrations cross the ages ;

## *for Mrs. Daniel*

For tho' they mistook heat-condition  
Of matter for its composition  
(in which not one of all the lot'll  
seem more at sea than Aristotle), 50  
We've now-a-days no boss so swagger as  
Empedocles or Anaxagoras ;  
While th' intuitions of Democritus  
Transcend whatever Hume or Locke writ us.

But jealous Time, who was unwilling  
To suffer those poor fifty-shilling  
Presentments of the brows of Hellas,  
Snubb'd them as readily and as well as  
His frost and rain make scald and sorry  
Th'ashlar of our suburban quarry. 60

So 'twas in my day that the thirteen<sup>1</sup>  
Left all who look'd on them uncertain  
Whether the comical old fossils  
Were sages Kaisers or Apostles,  
Or studied types of such impostors  
As any seat of learning fosters ;  
Prehaps, said some malicious guessers,  
Old Heads of Houses or Professors  
In days when scholars all were toppers,  
After Charles sack'd the interlopers, 70  
And every don and dean was able  
To drink a Dutchman neath the table.

Faced with this scandal the Curators  
Would to their trust hav been but traitors,  
Had they allow'd the wrecks to worsen ;  
Nor 'mong them was a single person,  
Master of Arts or scarlet D.D.  
So void of scruple and unheedy

<sup>1</sup> There had been originally 14 on the segment. One was cut out when the Clarendon printing house invaded the site. Those on the straight wall to the west are a spurious addition neglected in this description.

## *Verses written*

As not to deem it an iniquity  
That genuine objects of antiquity,  
Howe'er incongruous or rumbustuous,  
Should thro' neglect be wholly lost to us :  
Wherefor in '68 the Board  
Decreed the heads should be restored  
Before the most decay'd and choppiest  
Should quite defy a faithful copyist.

Lo ! then, whate'er the first designer  
Had dream'd of earthlier or diviner,  
His little effort quite went under  
And we possess'd the world's tenth wonder.  
Thank heaven I saw them at their smartest  
As they were turn'd out by the artist,  
And recognised that there were things  
Unknown to prophets and to kings,  
Whether or no they had desired them,  
However much their faith inspired them.  
Daring incompetence had master'd  
Th' impossible and gotten a bastard,  
Which tower'd in strength without relation  
To human thought or God's creation,  
And made what still in travellers' eyes is  
One of old England's great surprises.

But Time again, who all things stomachs,  
Soon brought them to their pristine flummux ;  
And that especial mullion-scullion,  
Second in rank from th' old Ashmolean  
(whose prototype at trifling expense  
Daniel secured for three and sixpence)  
And, 'mong the intellectual progeny, 's  
Intended doubtless for Diogenes,  
Is moulder'd down until his noddle  
Well represents its quondam model :  
Indeed the stone may hav been weaker  
Of which they fashioned the replica,

## *for Mrs. Daniel*

(so Madan says with perfect fitness)  
For all the set—as I can witness,  
Oft as I visit Henry Bradley  
To suck his brains, who suffers gladly,  
Stuffing the words into their pigeonholes—  
Are rotted worse than the originals.

120

This of the bust in Daniel's garden :  
Tho' stone will soften ink may harden  
To save a memory else abolish'd  
Of Worcester House long since demolish'd.  
When the townfolk to disentangle  
The traffic, rounded off the angle  
By which the carts and cabs must always  
Crowd from north-Oxford to the railways.

Long live the bust, a festering relic  
Of days perhaps not quite angelic,  
Those changeful days that pass'd between,  
say, Verdant Green and T. H. Green,  
With th' eighteenth century still fruiting,  
The nineteenth rooting and uprooting :  
But since all things the while they germinate  
Are undefined and indeterminate,  
I'll not set up to be historian  
Of th' era now yclept Victorian,  
Full tho' it was of strength and colour  
Nor emptier of delite nor duller  
Than days which with their customs antique  
Seen from afar look more romantic.

130

140

Not then to theorise or speculate,—  
When '63 saw me matriculate  
There still wer fights 'twixt Town and Gown,  
Nor Bouncer's type was yet liv'd down.  
I knew one fellow, a handsome scout  
Of Corpus, had an eye put out  
Following as Bull-dog with the Proctor ;  
And 'twas an earl who paid his doctor.

150

## Verses written

If Tommy Case then bought a new cur,  
He dealt perforce with Filthy Luker :  
But if men hunted or drove tandem  
The Proctor did not reprimand 'em.  
At crowded wines 'with songs and clatter  
Freshmen wer taught their brains to scatter,  
Yet still within the college compass  
Monkish seclusion lurk'd in rumpus ;  
A pore scoler might sport his oak  
Nor fear to hav his windows broke, 160  
Nor was there any intrusion feminine,  
The porter let not dogs or women in :  
But now—even tho' no college ball's on—  
Girls are about, and if one calls on  
A nephew, ten to one the blade is  
Giving a teaparty to ladies,  
His room with cigarette-smoke stuffy ;  
Wherat he spends, on tea and coffee  
And butter'd buns, so sober-minded,  
As much as we on beer and wine did. 170  
No don survives now whom it vexes  
To see this ease between the sexes,  
And we'd some dons dead as those dummies  
Carven on tombs to look like mummies  
Waiting until the resurrection  
To put their trowsers and their neck-tie on.<sup>1</sup>

As for the boys, tho' our *juventus*  
Was not perhaps all as God meant us,  
Too eager in th' exploit of pastime,  
Yet on our books we spent no less time, 180  
Pronouncing Latin quite as oddly  
As A. C. Clark or A. D. Godley,  
And sportively intent on getting  
A first in Greats against the betting :  
For teachers know examination

Consonantia obsoleta imaginis vetustati liberrime congruens.

## *for Mrs. Daniel*

To be the crown of education :  
Since minds cannot like plants be trusted  
To keep their rootlets well-adjusted,  
They who would rear them must examine 'em  
To gauge th' effect of what they cram in 'em. 190

True, in our gamesome gay ideal  
Comfort bulk'd somewhat large and real,  
*Plus aequo operati in cute*  
*Curanda*, yet 'twas not so footy ;  
We liv'd a life of joy unchequer'd ;  
We lov'd and laugh'd and beat the record.

Delivering well-pitch'd balls no worse is  
Than turning out neat Latin verses ;  
Or, if the latter trick surpasses  
The former, 'tis in making asses. 200  
Within the church, which sadly suffers  
From blinkerdom of classic duffers,  
To hav been a batsman does not weaken  
The reverence paid to an archdeacon,  
And every bishop knows it biasses  
The public favour in his diocese ;  
While if he has only stroked the eight-oar  
He curules it like a dictator.

And certain 'tis that nature ossifies  
In students who too much philosophize ; 210  
No man can brood on abstract Unity  
Or abstract Being with impunity ;  
And some I knew that haunted whilom  
The schools who died in an asylum.

There was malaise in the defiance  
With which the gown regarded science ;  
As now it wounds whom it astounds  
To hear that speech is made of sounds,  
Phonetical,—O word of fear  
Unpleasing to a marrèd ear ! 220

Awkwardness shyness and selfconsciousness

## *Verses written*

Were but the garment of pretentiousness ;  
'Twixt younger don and undergraduate  
There's freer commerce now, and, had you it  
Complete, 'twould lubricate the wheel  
Which otherwise must stick or squeal.

Who'd now believe that wisdom's pith  
Was wrapp'd from sight in Goldwin Smith ?  
Ah ! if some scornful future Timon  
Should know the names that I could ryme on, 230  
And judge those men by what they built,  
Will he distinguish folly and guilt  
In him who rear'd that gothic fustian  
On Christ Church meadows for a bastion ?  
In them whose taste it was to shunt  
Butterfield's box on Merton front ?  
Or, seeing Balliol as we know it,  
Will he suppose that Master Jowett  
More light and sweetness suck'd from Plato  
Than a man might from a potato ? 240  
Nay ! Pin each name to its memorial ;  
'Twas the high fellowship of Oriel,  
On such a site, in such a seat ;  
Perpetrated King Edward Street !

The boys meanwhile clear of these shames  
Added on music to their games ;  
And, freelier so their legs to use,  
Above the knee cut short their trews,  
And did not for ill-manners take it  
To run upon the street half-naked. 250

And then the WAR . . . . .  
. . . . . I thought not, when  
I laid hand on this skittish pen  
To carry me cantering across country,  
The jade would show so much effront'ry,  
And lurching with a vice inveterate

*for Mrs. Daniel*

Refuse the last fence that I set her at.  
She does.—And since my run is ended  
I'll plead 'least said is soonest mended',  
And shove the rest back in my storeroom :  
So make the most of this culorum.

260



## THE WIDOW

WHENEVER I pass that house  
 my heart is in prayer  
 for reverence of the angels  
     who are watching there ;  
 where a widow reareth  
     the child that she bore  
 after her young lover  
     was kill'd in the war.

A bird torn by the hawk  
     hath pangs bodily  
 and a birth of wonder  
     in its agony :  
 'Tis man's Gethsemane  
     to know his soul riven  
 and feel the bleeding roots  
     being torn out from heaven.

God speed thee with comfort,  
     thou sorrowing one,  
 may God give thee great joy  
     and pride in thy son !  
 Thy hope's haunted ruin  
     is not to rebuild :  
 How shall the broken cup  
     with wine be refill'd ?

Keep thou bravely for him  
     thought of thy morrow,  
 and thy beauty for grace  
     of thy life's sorrow,  
 like a wreathing rainbow  
     over thy way thrown,  
 sanctifying thy presence  
     while thou walkest alone.

THE TESTAMENT  
OF BEAUTY  
*A Poem in Four Books*



To  
The King  
of

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ME VERO PRIMVM DVLCES ANTE OMNIA MVSAE  
QVARVM SACRA FERO INGENTI PERCVSSVS AMORE  
ACCIPIANT

# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

## BOOK I

### INTRODUCTION

**M**ORTAL Prudence, handmaid of divine Providence,  
hath inscrutable reckoning with Fate and Fortune:  
We sail a changeful sea through halcyon days and storm,  
and when the ship laboureth, our stedfast purpose  
trembles like as the compass in a binnacle.  
Our stability is but balance, and conduct lies  
in masterful administration of the unforeseen.

'Twas late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where  
the path was narrowing and the company few,  
a glow of childlike wonder enthral'd me, as if my sense 10  
had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt  
re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;  
with like surprise of joy as any man may know  
who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top  
to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spredd  
mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged  
he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,  
maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June  
bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come afar 20  
on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced  
thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was  
of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made  
a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:  
But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness,

## *The Testament of Beauty*

the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent lawns,  
I would hav lain me down and long'd, as then I did,  
to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch  
the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,  
waving in gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30  
each telling of its own inconstant happiness,  
each type a faultless essence of God's will, such gems  
as magic master-minds in painting or music  
threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;  
things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd  
in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

To such a mood I had come, by what charm I know not,  
where on thatt upland path I was pacing alone;  
and yet was nothing new to me, only all was vivid  
and significant that had been dormant or dead: 40  
as if in a museum the fossils on their shelves  
should come to life suddenly, or a winter rose-bed  
burst into crowded holiday of scent and bloom.  
I felt the domination of Nature's secret urge,  
and happy escape therein; as when in boyhood once  
from the rattling workshops of a great factory  
conducted into the engine-room I stood in face  
of the quiet driving power, that fast in nether cave  
seated, set all the floors a-quiver, a thousand looms  
throbbing and jennies dancing; and I felt at heart 50  
a kinship with it and sympathy, as children wil  
with amicable monsters: for in truth the mind  
is indissociable from what it contemplates,  
as thirst and generous wine are to a man that drinketh  
nor kenneth whether his pleasur is more in his desire  
or in the savor of the rich grape that allays it. //

✓ Man's Reason is in such deep insolvency to sense,  
that tho' she guide his highest flight heav'nward, and teach him

## Book I. Introduction

dignity morals manners and human comfort,  
she can delicatly and dangerously bedizen 60  
the rioting joys that fringe the sad pathways of Hell.  
Nor without alliance of the animal senses  
hath she any miracle: Lov'st thou in the blithe hour  
of April dawns—nay marvelest thou not—to hear  
the ravishing music that the small birdēs make  
in garden or woodland, rapturously heralding  
the break of day; when the first lark on high hath warn'd  
the vigilant robin already of the sun's approach,  
and he on slender pipe calleth the nesting tribes  
to awake and fill and thrill their myriad-warbling throats 70  
praising life's God, untill the blisful revel grow  
in wild profusion unfeign'd to such a hymn as man  
hath never in temple or grove pour'd to the Lord of heav'n ?

Hast thou then thought that all this ravishing music,  
that stirreth so thy heart, making thee dream of things  
illimitable unsearchable and of heavenly import,  
is but a light disturbance of the atoms of air,  
whose jostling ripples, gather'd within the ear, are tuned  
to resonant scale, and thence by the enthron'd mind received  
on the spiral stairway of her audience chamber 80  
as heralds of high spiritual significance ?  
and that without thine ear, sound would hav no report.  
Nature hav no music; nor would ther be for thee  
any better melody in the April woods at dawn  
than what an old stone-deaf labourer, lying awake  
o'night in his comfortless attic, might perchance  
be aware of, when the rats run amok in his thatch ?

Now since the thoughtless birds not only act and enjoy  
this music, but to their offspring teach it with care,  
handing on those small folk-songs from father to son 90  
in such faithful tradition that they are familiar  
unchanging to the changeful generations of men—  
and year by year, listening to himself the nightingale



## *The Testament of Beauty*

as amorous of his art as of his brooding mate  
practiseth every phrase of his espousal lay,  
and still provoketh envy of the lesser songsters  
with the same notes that woke poetic eloquence  
alike in Sophocles and the sick heart of Keats—  
see then how deeply seated is the urgency whereto  
Bach and Mozart obey'd, or those other minstrels 100  
who pioneer'd for us on the marches of heav'n  
and paid no heed to wars that swept the world around,  
nor in their homes wer more troubled by cannon-roar  
than late the small birds wer, that nested and carol'd  
upon the devastated battlefields of France.

Birds are of all animals the nearest to men  
for that they take delight in both music and dance,  
and gracefully schooling leisure to enliven life  
wer the earlier artists: moreover in their airy flight  
(which in its swiftness symbolesh man's soaring thought) 110  
they hav no rival but man, and easily surpass  
in their free voyaging his most desperate daring,  
altho' he hath fed and sped his ocean-ships with fire;  
and now, disturbing me as I write, I hear on high  
his roaring airplanes, and idly raising my head  
see them there; like a migratory flock of birds  
that rustle southward from the cold fall of the year  
in order'd phalanx—so the thin-rankt squadrons ply,  
til sound and sight failing me they are lost in the clouds.

Man's happiness, his flaunting honey'd flower of soul, 120  
is his loving response to the wealth of Nature.  
Beauty is the prime motiv of all his excellence,  
his aim and peaceful purpose; whereby he himself  
becoming a creator hath often a thought to ask  
why Nature, being so inexhaustible of beauty,  
should not be all-beauteous; why, from infinit resource,  
produce more ugliness than human artistry

## *Book I. Introduction*

with any spiritual intention can allow ?

Wisdom will repudiate thee, if thou think to enquire  
WHY things are as they are or whence they came: thy task 130  
is first to learn WHAT IS, and in pursuant knowledge  
pure intellect will find pure pleasur and the only ground  
for a philosophy conformable to truth.

And wouldst thou play Creator and Ordinator of things,  
be Nature then thy Chaos and be thou her God!  
Whereafter, if in spirit dishearten'd and distress'd  
to find evil with good, ugly with beautiful  
proffer'd by Nature indifferently without shame,  
thou wilt proceed to judge, but in conning thy brief  
suspect the prejudice of human self-regard 140  
distinguishing moralities where never is none—

thou art come round wrongfully again to question Nature,  
who by her own faculty in thee judgeth herself:

to impugn thy verdict is to unseat thatt judge.

And science vindicateth the appeal to Reason  
which is no less Nature's prescriptiv oracle  
for being in all her plan so small and tickle a thing:

How small a thing! if things immeasurable allow  
a greater and less (and thought wil reckon some thoughts great,  
prolific, everlasting; other some again 150

small and contemptible) say then, How small a part  
of Universal Mind can conscient Reason claim!

'Tis to the unconscious mind as the habitable crust  
is to the mass of the earth; this crust whereon we dwell  
whereon our loves and shames are begotten and buried,  
our first slime and ancestral dust: 'Tis, to compare,  
thinner than o'er a luscious peach the velvet skin  
that we rip off to engorge the rich succulent pulp:  
Wer but our planet's sphere so peel'd, flay'd of the rind  
that wraps its lava and rock, the solar satellite 160  
would keep its motions in God's orrery undisturb'd.

Yea: and how delicat! Life's mighty mystery

## *The Testament of Beauty*

sprang from eternal seeds in the elemental fire,  
self-animat in forms that fire annihilates:  
all its selfpropagating organisms exist  
only within a few degrees of the long scale  
ranging from measured zero to unimagin'd heat,  
a little oasis of Life in Nature's desert;  
and ev'n therein are our soft bodies vex'd and harm'd  
by their own small distemperature, nor could they endure 170  
wer't not that by a secret miracle of chemistry  
they hold internal poise upon a razor-edge  
that may not ev'n be blunted, lest we sicken and die.

This Intellect, whereby above the other species  
Mankind assumeth genus in a rank apart,  
is nascent also in brutes, and of their bloodkinship  
as fair a warranty as our common passions are,  
our common bones and muscles, skin and nerves of sense.  
But because human sorrow springeth of man's thought, ✓  
some men hav fal'n unhappily to envy the brutes 180  
who for mere lack of reason, love life and enjoy  
existence without care: and in some sort doubtless  
happier are they than many a miserable man,  
whether in disease or misfortune outclass'd from life  
or thru' the disillusion of Lust wreck'd in remorse:  
Corruption of best is ever the worst corruption.

'Tis true ther is no balance to weigh these goods and ills  
nor any measur of them, like as of colour and heat  
in their degrees; they are incommensurable in kind.  
'Tis with mere pleasur and pain as if they, being so light, 190  
could not this way or thatt deflect Life's monarch-beam;  
for howso deliberately a man may wish for death  
still wil he instinctivly fight to the last for life.  
Yet with the burden of thought pains are of great moment,  
and sickening thought itself engendereth corporal pain:

## *Book I. Introduction*

But likewise also of pleasure—here too Reason again,  
whether in prospect or memory, is the greater part;  
our hope is ever livelier than despair, our joy  
livelier and more abiding than our sorrows are,  
which leak away untill no taint remain; their seeds 200  
shriveling too thin to lodge in Memory's hustled sieve.  
Wherefore I assert:—if Reason's only function wer  
to heighten our pleasure, thatt wer vindication enough;  
For what wer pleasur if never contemplation gave  
a spiritual significance to objects of sense,  
nor in thought's atmosphere poetic vision arose ?

Brutes hav their keener senses far outrangeing ours  
nor without here and there some adumbration of soul:  
But the sensuous intuition in them is steril,  
'tis the bare cloth whereon our rich banquet is spredd; 210  
and so the sorrowful sufferer who envied their state,  
wer he but granted his blind wish to liv as they  
—whether 'twere lark or lion, or some high-antler'd stag  
in startled pose of his fantastic majesty  
gazing adown the glade—he would draw blank, nor taste  
the human satisfaction of his release from care:  
as well be a sloven toad in his dark hole: Unlike  
those damn'd souls by the Harpies tantalized in Hell  
whose tortur it was to see their ostentatious feast  
snatch'd from their reach—but he sitting with the dainties 220  
out-spredd before him would see them, nor ever feel  
any desire nor memory of their old relish.

This quarrel and dissatisfaction of man with Nature  
springeth of a vision which beareth assurance  
of the diviner principle implicit in Life:  
And mystic Vision may so wholly absorb a man  
that he wil loathe ev'n pleasure, mortifying the flesh  
by disciplin of discomfort so to strengthen his faith.  
Thus tho' 'twas otherwise than on Plato's ladder

## *The Testament of Beauty*

that Francis climb'd—rather his gentle soul had learn'd 230  
from taste of vanity and by malease of the flesh—  
he abjured as worthless ev'n what good men wil call good,  
and standing forth, as chivalrous knight and champion  
of holiness, in his devotion of heart to God,  
all earthly sun-joys seem'd so transitory and vain  
that soon the unseen took shape to common eyes; the folk  
cumber'd him with servility, and his memory  
is beatified in the admiration of all mankind.

Now his following in life and his fame thereafter  
confute the lower school of Ethick, which would teach 240  
that spiritual ideas are but dream-stuff in men:  
For Francis admitted no compromise nor gloss  
whereby the Church had thought to ease the easy yoke  
which he resoulder'd as his Master had offer'd it,  
and espousing Poverty as the outcast widow of Christ  
would walk in Umbria as He walk'd in Galilee  
founding the kingdom of God among those angry Jews  
who made earthly rebellion against Cæsar's empire:  
and in imitation and compassion of Jesus  
would touch nothing but what had been bless'd at his lips: 250  
For the morrow hav no more care than a lily hath—  
for his head no more shelter than a beast of the field—  
no purse nor scrip for his journey, and but one garment—  
and scorning intellect and pursuit of knowledge  
liv'd as a bare spirit in its low prison of flesh,  
until thru' tribulation he should win to peace,  
*quam mundus nobis dare non potest pacem,*  
in those eternal mansions where Dante found him  
among the Just. Yet ev'n Francis coud praise Nature,  
tho' from such altitude whatever pictur is drawn 260  
must be out of focus of our terrestrial senses.

'Twas thus he made, when he lay sick in Damian,  
his hymn in honour of God and praise of his creatures;  
All-first and specially of the Sun whom he calleth

## Book I. Introduction

his honourable brother and symbol of Very God;  
and then the Moon his sister, and all the stars of heav'n  
the clouds and winds his kindred; and of the Earth he saith—  
*Praisèd be thou, my Lord, for my sister, Mother Earth,*  
*who doth sustain and govern us and bringeth forth*  
*all manner of fruit and herb and flowers of myriad hue.* 270

In direst pain of body and despond of soul he ask'd

but for this Bencitè to be sung by his bed,  
fleeing for sanctuary to the bond of Nature—

“the inconceivable high works unfathomable

whose aspect giveth the Angels strength, and men  
revere the gentle changes of the day.”—

The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play  
sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now  
stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous  
mountainous snowbillowy up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280

Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,

Now scatter'd wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze

disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane

highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl

freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close o'erhead,

wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain

gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:

Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms

mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb

deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching flood

rebuff the winds, and with black-purple terror impend 291

til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully

clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils

layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;

and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space

twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

Them soon the jealous Day o'errideth to display

Earth's green robe, which the sun fostereth for shelter and  
shower

## *The Testament of Beauty*

The dance of young trees that in a wild birch-spinney  
toss to and fro the cluster of their flickering crests, 300  
as rye curtseying in array to the breeze of May;  
The ancestral trunks that mightily in the forest choirs  
rear steadfast colonnade, or imperceptibly

sway in tall pinewoods to their whispering spires;  
The woodland's alternating hues, the vaporous bloom  
of the first blushings and tender flushings of spring;  
The slumbrous foliage of high midsummer's wealth;  
Rich Autumn's golden quittance, to the bankruptcy  
of the black shapely skeletons standing in snow:  
Or, in gay months of swelling pomp, the luxury 310  
of leisur'd gardens teeming with affection'd thought;  
the heartfelt secrecy of rustic nooks, and valleys  
vocal with angelic rilling of rocky streams,  
by rambling country-lanes, with hazel and thorn embower'd  
woodbine, bryony and wild roses; the landscape lure  
of rural England, that held glory in native art  
untill our painters took their new fashion from France.

This spiritual elation and response to Nature  
is Man's generic mark. A wolf that all his life  
had hunted after nightfall neath the starlit skies 320  
should he suddenly attain the first inklings of thought  
would feel this Wonder: and by some kindred stir of mind  
the ruminants can plead approach—the look of it  
is born already of fear and gentleness in the eyes  
of the wild antelope, and hence by fable assign'd  
to the unseen unicorn reposed in burning lair—  
a symbol of majestic sadness and lonely pride:  
but the true intellectual wonder is first reveal'd  
in children and savages and 'tis there the footing  
of all our temples and of all science and art. 330

Thus Rafaël once venturing to show God in Man  
gave a child's eyes of wonder to the baby Christ;

## *Book I. Introduction*

and his Mantuan brother could he have seen that picture  
would more truly have foreshadow'd the incarnation of God.  
'Tis divinest childhood's incomparable bloom,  
the loss whereof leaveth the man's face shabby and dull.

'SEEKING unceasingly for the First Cause of All,  
in question for what special Purpose he was made,  
Man, in the unsearchable darkness, knoweth one thing  
that as he is, so was he made: and if the Essence 340  
and characteristic faculty of humanity  
is our conscient Reason and our desire of knowledge,  
that was Nature's Purpose in the making of man.

But can there be any Will or Purpose in Nature?  
that Universe external to our percipient sense,  
which when we examine itself we think only to find  
a structure of blind atoms to their habits enslaved,  
or else, examining our senses, suspect to be  
a dream of empty appearance and vain imagery.—

As a man through a window into a darkened house 350  
peering vainly will see, always and easily,  
the glass surface and his own face mirrored thereon,  
though looking from another angle, or hooding his eyes  
he may discern some real objects within the room—  
some say 'tis so with us, and also affirm that they  
by study of their reflection have discovered in truth  
there is nothing but that same reflection inside the house.

See how they have made of the window an impermeable wall  
partitioning man off from the rest of nature  
with stronger impertinence than Science can allow. 360  
Man's mind, Nature's entrusted gem, her own mirror  
cannot be isolated from her other works  
by self-abstraction of its unique fecundity  
in the new realm of his transcendent life;—  
Not emotion or imagination ethical or art



## *The Testament of Beauty*

logic of science nor dialectic discourse,  
not ev'n thatt supersensuous sublimation of thought,  
the euristic vision of mathematical trance,  
hath any other foundation than the common base  
of Nature's building:—not even his independence 370  
of will, his range of knowledge, and spiritual aim,  
can separate him off from the impercipient:  
Altho' his mind be such that it might seem as if  
true Individuality within the species  
were peculiar to man: So foolish is he, and wise,—  
despondent and hopeful, patient and complaining,  
' courageous and cowardly, diffident and vain,  
cringing and commanding, industrious and idle,  
cruel and tenderhearted, truthful and perfidious,  
imaginativ or dull—one man how loveable 380  
another how hateful, alike man, brutal or divine.

Whereamong hath the sceptic honourable place,  
thatt old iconoclast who coud destroy the gods  
soon as men made them, vain imagery and unworthy,  
low symbols of the Eternal that standeth unchanged.  
Like some medicinal root in pharmacy, whose juice  
is wholesom for purgation,—so is he—and if Truth  
be thatt which Omniscience would assert of all things,  
we may grant him his motto "Truth is not for man".  
But from his sleepy castle he wil be tempted forth 390  
if ever a hunting-horn echo in the woods around,  
for he loveth the chase, and, like a good sportsman,  
his hounds and his weapons as he loveth the prey.

So musing all my days with unceasing wonder  
and encountering many phases of many minds,  
thru' kindly environment of my disposition  
I grew, as all things grow, in the pattern of Self;  
til stumbling early upon the mystic words, whereby  
—in the Semitic matrix of my father's creed—

## Book I. Introduction

Jahveh reveal'd his secret Being to the Jews, 400  
and conning those large letters I AM THAT I AM  
I wonder'd finding only my own thought of myself,  
and reading there that man was made in God's image  
knew not yet that God was made in the image of man  
nor the profounder truth that both these truths are one,  
no quibbling scoff—for surely as mind in man groweth  
so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,  
wider ever and worthier, untill it may contain  
and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love,  
and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth.

Nor could it ever dwell in my possible thought 411  
that whatsoever grew and groweth can be unlike  
in cause and substance to the thing it groweth on:  
Thus I saw Conscience as a natural flower-bud  
on its vigorous plant specialized to a function  
marvelously, a blossom first unique in design  
of beauty, in colour and form, thickening therefrom to a fruit  
productiv to infinit regeneration; and yet  
this bud—as any primer of botany can teach—  
is but a differentiation of the infertile leaf, 420  
which held all this miracle in intrinsic potency.

Thus science would teach, and Heraclitus, I say,  
was not the least among the sages of Hellas,  
Nor those fire-worshippers foolish who, seeing the Sun  
to be the efficient cause of all life upon earth,  
welcomed his full effulgence for their symbol of God.  
And since we observe in all existence four stages—  
Atomic, Organic, Sensuous, and Selfconscient—  
and must conceive these in gradation, it was no flaw  
in Leibnitz to endow his monad-atoms with Mind: 430  
tho' in our schools of thought "unconscious mind" is call'd  
a contradiction in terms; as if the embranglements  
of logic wer the prime condition of all Being,  
the essence of things; and man in the toilsom journey

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from conscience of nothing to conscient ignorance  
mistook his tottery crutch for the main organ of life.

'Tis laughable that man should fondle such surprise  
at animal behaviour, seeing some beetle or fly  
—whose very existence is so negligible and brief—  
act more intelligently than he might himself 440  
had he been there to advise with all his pros and cons,  
his cause, effect and means: Such conduct he wil style  
“Marvels of Instinct”, but what sort of wisdom is this  
that mistaketh the exception for the general rule  
and the rule for the exception? Since the animal world  
immeasurably outnumbereth the species of man,  
and wholly is ruled by Instinct: 'Tis the Reason of man  
that is the exception and marvel; nay, 'tis plain to see  
how, as our Life is animal so also our conduct  
is mainly instinctiv, while pure Reason left to herself 450  
relieth on axioms and essential premises  
which she can neither question nor resolve, things far  
beyond her, holding her anchor in eternal Mind, ✓  
characteristic universals, the firm rock  
whereon her lofty watch-towers are planted, and all  
her star-gazing observatories built. ✓

Wise thinkers do homage to good fellow-thinkers,  
nor disregard the general commonsense of man  
—that untouch'd photograph of external Nature  
self-pictur'd for us nakedly on her own mirror:— 460  
and tho' common opinion may be assent in error  
ther is little or none accord in philosophic thought:  
this picklock Reason is still a-fumbling at the wards,  
bragging to unlock the door of stern Reality.  
Ask what is reasonable! See how time and clime  
conform mind more than body in their environment;  
what then and there was Reason, is here and now absurd;  
what I now chance to approve, may be or become to others

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strange and unpalatable as now appear to me  
the weighty sentences of the angelic Doctor: 470  
For I rank it among the unimaginables  
how Saint Thomas, with all his honesty and keen thought,  
toiling to found an irrefragable system  
of metaphysic, ethic and theologic truth  
should with open eyes hav accepted for main premiss  
the myth of a divine fiasco, on which to assure  
the wisdom of God; leading to a foregon conclusion  
of illachrymable logic, a monstrous scheme  
*horrendum informe ingens cui Lumen ademptum.*

Some would say that the Saint himself held not the faith 480  
which universal credit compell'd him to assume  
if he would lead and teach the Church: But so to think  
(as tho' 'twas but the best gambit to open his game)  
wer to his acumen and his honesty alike unjust.  
I am happier in surmising that his vision at Mass  
—in Naples it was when he fell suddenly in trance—  
was some disenthralment of his humanity;  
for thereafter, whether 'twere Aristotle or Christ  
that had appear'd to him then, he nevermore wrote word  
neither dictated but laid by inkhorn and pen; 490  
and was as a man out of hearing on thatt day  
when Reynaldus, with all the importunity of zeal  
and intimacy of friendship, would hav recall'd him  
to his incompleated SUMMA; and sighing he reply'd  
*I wil tell thee a secret, my son, constraining thee  
lest thou dare impart it to any man while I liv.  
My writing is at end. I have seen such things reveal'd  
that what I hav written and taught seemeth to me of small  
worth.*  
*And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrin  
ther wil be speedily also an end of Life!* 500

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THER is no tradition among the lemmings of Norway  
how their progenitors, when their offspring increased,  
bravely forsook their crowded nestes in the snow,  
swarming upon the plains to ravage field and farm,  
and in unswerving course ate their way to the coast,  
where plunging down the rocks they swam in the salt sea  
to drowning death; nor hav they in acting thus today  
any plan for their journey or prospect in the event.

But clerks and chroniclers wer many in Christendom,  
when France and Germany pour'd out the rabblement 510  
of the second Crusade, and its record is writ;  
its leaders' titles, kings and knights of fair renown,  
their resolve and design: and yet for all their vows,  
their consecrating crosses and embroider'd flags,  
the eloquent preaching of Saint Bernard, and the wiles  
of thatt young amorous amazon, Queen Eleanòr,  
they wer impell'd as madly, journey'd as blindly  
and perish'd as miserably as the thoughtless voles,  
by disease starvation and massacre, or enslaved  
by wrath of the folk whose homes they had wreckt and  
ravaged; . 520  
til of the unnumber'd rout a poor remnant fled back,  
the shame of humanity for their folly and crimes.

Reason, shamefast at heart and vain above measure,  
would look to find the firstfruits of intelligence  
showing some provident correction of man's estate  
to'ard social order, a wise discriminat purpose  
in clear contrast against the blind habits of brutes:  
And when our honest hope turneth away repell'd  
by the terror and superstition of savagery  
—wherein nascent Reason seemeth to hav hoodwink'd Mind,—  
if we read but of Europe since the birth of Christ, 531  
'tis still incompetent disorder, all a lecture

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of irredeemable shame; the wrongs and sufferings  
alike of kings and clowns are a pitiful tale.

Follow the path of those fair warriors, the tall Goths,  
from the day when they led their blue-eyed families  
off Vistula's cold pasture-lands, their murky home  
by the amber-strewn foreshore of the Baltic sea,  
and in the incontaminat vigor of manliness  
feeling their rumour'd way to an unknown promised land, 540  
tore at the ravel'd fringes of the purple power,  
and trampling its wide skirts, defeating its armies,  
slaying its Emperor, and burning his cities,  
sack'd Athens and Rome; untill supplanting Cæsar

they ruled the world where Romans reign'd before:—  
Yet from those three long centuries of rapin and blood,  
inhumanity of heart and wanton cruelty of hand,  
ther is little left, save the broken relic of one  
good bishop, and the record of one noble king,  
—who both had suck'd their virtue from the wither'd dugs  
of learning, where she lay sickening within the walls 551  
of rich Byzance:—Those Goths wer strong but to destroy;  
they neither wrote nor wrought, thought not nor created;  
but since the field was rank with tares and mildew'd wheat,  
their scything won some praise: Else hav they left no trace,  
save for their share in thatt rich mingled character  
of Hebrew, Roman, Vandal, Mussulman and Kelt,  
that spoke the pride of Spain, to stand for ever alive  
in one grandesque effigy of ennobled folly,  
among fair Beauty's fairest offspring unproved. 560

Yet for this intellectual laughter—deem it not  
true Wisdom's panoply. The wise wil live by Faith,  
faith in the order of Nature and that her order is good.  
'Twer scepticism in them to cherish make-believe,  
creeds and precise focusings of the unsearchable:  
at such things they may smile; yet for man's ignorance  
and frailty the only saving consolation is faith,

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the which theologians tell us is the gift of God, ✓  
as other good things are, and laughter is one of them;  
and sharing of man's Essence 'twil be at height in him 570  
when 'tis the laughter of Reason—enjoyable; and 'tis fit  
that he should show Nature this courtesy, and kindly  
make light of all the troubles that compel no tears: ✓

—Cervantes in misfortune when a galley-slave  
wept not—but where sorrow is sacred humour is dumb, ✓  
and in full calamity it is madness ✓ wherefore  
Hamlet himself would never hav been aught to us, or we  
to Hamlet, wer't not for the artful balance whereby  
Shakespeare so gingerly put his sanity in doubt  
without the while confounding his Reason. ✓ 580

And tho' desire of perfection is Nature's promise  
we should not in the field of Reason look to find  
less vary and veer than elsewhere in the flux of Life:  
We may rather rejoice in the great abundance,  
the indigenous fruitage of our gay Paradise,  
that Persia, China and Babylon put forth their bloom,  
that India and Egypt wer seedplots of wisdom.  
The best part of our lives we are wanderers in Romance:  
Our fathers travel'd Eastward to revel in wonders  
where pyramid pagoda and picturesque attire 590  
glow in the fading sunset of antiquity;  
and now wil the Orientals make hither in return  
outlandish pilgrimage: their wiseacres hav seen  
the electric light i' the West, and come to worship;  
tasting romance in our unsightly novelties  
and scientific tricks; for all things in their day  
may hav opinion of glory: Glory is opinion,  
the vain doxology wherewith man would praise God.

Time eateth away at many an old delusion,  
yet with civilization delusions make head; 600

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the thicket of the people wil take furtiv fire  
from irresponsible catchwords of live ideas,

sudden as a gorse-bush from the smouldering end  
of any loiterer's match-splint, which, unless trodden out  
afore it spredd, or quell'd with wieldy threshing-rods  
wil burn ten years of planting with all last year's ricks  
and blacken a countryside. 'Tis like enough that men  
ignorant of fire and poison should be precondemn'd  
to sudden deaths and burnings, but 'tis mightily  
to the reproach of Reason that she cannot save 610  
nor guide the herd; that minds who else wer fit to rule  
must win to power by flattery and pretence, and so  
by spiritual dishonesty in their flurried reign  
confirm the disrepute of all authority—  
but only in sackcloth can the Muse speak of such things.

WISDOM HATH HEWED HER HOUSE: She that dwelleth  
always

with God in the Evermore, afore any world was,  
fashion'd the nascent Earth that the energy of its life  
might come to evolution in the becoming of Man,  
who, as her subject, should subject all to her rule 620  
and bring God's latest work to be a realm of delight.  
So she herself, the essential Beauty of Holiness,  
pass'd her creativ joy into the creature's heart,  
to take back from his hand her Adoration robes  
and royal crown of his Imagination and Love.

And when she had made of men lovers and worshippers,  
these vied to enshrine her godhead in enduring fanes  
and architectur of stone, that high her pensiv towers  
might hallow their throng'd cities and, transfeaturing  
Nature's wilding landscape to the impress of her Mind, 630  
comfort man's mortality with immortal grace.

Yet not to those colossal temples where old Nile



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guideth a ribbon oasis thru' the Libyan sands,  
depositing a kingdom from his fabled fount  
—like that twin-sister stream of slothful thought, whose flood  
fertilized the rude mind of Egypt—not to these,  
nor those Cyclopean tombs, which hieroglyphic kings  
uprear'd to hide their mummies from the common death,  
whereto their folk dragging the slow burdensome stones  
wer driven and fed like beasts, untill the pyramid 640  
in geometrical enormity peak'd true—  
'Tis not to these—nay nor in Gizeh to that Sphinx,  
grand solitary symbol of man's double nature,  
with lion body couchant and with human head  
gazing out vainly from the desert—not to these  
look we with grateful pleasur or satisfaction of soul  
wonderfine tho' they be, and indestructible  
against sandblast of time and spoliation of man—  
nor tho' with sixty centuries of knowledge pass'd  
still those primeval sculptors shame our paltry style:— 650  
Nay ev'n so, not to these look we to find comfort;  
Not yet was Wisdom justified of her children.✓

Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks  
of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:  
agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles  
and promontories of the blue Ionian shore  
—where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing  
old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—  
and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,  
wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660  
whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right  
knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land  
whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win  
heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue  
that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd,  
and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus

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motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took  
her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis  
of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670  
patterning heav'nly beauty, a pictur'd idea  
that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:  
for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told  
by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,  
nor is discerpible in logic, but is itself  
an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,  
nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle .  
the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—  
yet are we aware of such existences crowding,  
mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680  
phantasies intangible investing us closely,  
hid only from our eyes by skies that wil not clear:  
activ presences, striving to force an entrance,  
like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgence pleading  
to be brought to birth in our conscient existence,  
as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;  
even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—  
And every divination of Natur or reach of Art  
is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude  
of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690  
their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess  
the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,  
flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall  
ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying  
scatter'd its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:  
nor ever again hath like bloom appear'd among men.

Knowledge accumulath slowly and not in vain;

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with new attainment new orders of beauty arise,  
in thought and art new values; but man's faculties 700  
were gifted once for all and stand, 'twould seem, at stay:  
Ther is now no higher intellect to brighten the world  
than little Hellas own'd; nay scarcely here and there  
liveth a man among us to rival their seers.

So might we fear that such implicit unity,  
so friendly a passionat love for nature beauty and truth,  
such dignity of the body tender of pride and shame,  
such lively accord of Sense, Instinct, Reason and Spirit  
as gazeth down on us with alien sovranity  
from all their statuesque literature and art, 710  
wer a grace (so might we fear) like the grace of childhood  
lost in growth, a glory of the past, not to return.

Such 'twere vain to deplore; since true beauty of manhood  
outfeatureth childish charm, and whether in men or things  
Best is mature; tho' Beauty is neither growth nor strength;  
for ugliness also groweth proudly and is strong.  
Well might we ask what Beauty ever could liv or thrive  
in our crowded democracy under governance  
of such politic fancy as a farmer would show  
who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest: 720  
and yet hath modern cultur enrich'd a wasting soil;  
Science comforting man's animal poverty  
and leisuring his toil, hath humanized manners  
and social temper, and now above her globe-spredd net  
of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic,  
and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air  
hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands  
spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of life:  
Now music's prison'd raptur and the drown'd voice of truth  
mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea 730  
are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,  
into every heart and home their unhinder'd message,  
the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood;

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whereby war faln from savagery to fratricide,  
from a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,  
stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its brow.

And if the Greek Muses wer a graceful company  
yet hav we two, that in maturity transcend  
the promise of their baby-prattle in Time's cradle,  
Musick and Mathematick: coud their wet-nurses 740  
but see these foster-children upgrown in full stature,  
Pythagoras would marvel and Athena rejoice.

And ev'n to Apollo's choir was a rich voice lacking  
in the great symphonies of the poetic throng  
who beneath Homer's crown enroll'd immortal names;  
for without later names the full compass of song  
had been unknown to man—nay and some English names,  
whose younger voices in the imagination of love  
swell'd to spiritual ecstasy, and emotion'd life  
with mystic inspiration of new lyric rapture: 750  
and 'twas the first alluring gleam of thatt vision  
that stole by virtue of novelty the world away  
from the philosophic concinnity of Greek art,  
to abjure the severe ordering of its antique folds.

In love of fleshly prowess Hellas overesteem'd  
the nobility of passion and of animal strength,  
and the acclamation of their Olympic games outfaced  
spiritual combat;—as their forefathers wer they,  
those old seapirates, who with roving robbery 760  
built up their island lordships on the ruin of Crete,  
when the unforbearing rivalry of their free cities  
wreck'd their confederacy within the sevenscore years  
'twixt Marathon and Issus; untill from the pride  
of routing Xerxes and his fabulous host, they fell  
to make thatt most memorable of all invasions  
less memorable in the glory of Alexander,  
under whose alien kingship they conspired to outreach  
their own ambition, winning dominions too wide

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for domination; and wer, with their virtue, dispersed  
and molten into the great stiffening alloy of Rome. 770

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness  
with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,  
men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ  
crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame,  
in few years with few friends founded a world-empire  
wider than Alexander's and more enduring;  
since from his death it took its everlasting life.  
HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple  
not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. 780  
They who understand not cannot forget, and they  
who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.  
He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,  
and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,  
be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast:  
But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed  
that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,  
thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;  
While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX  
the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790

## BOOK II

### SELFHOOD

THE VISION OF THE SEER who saw the Spirit of Man.  
A chariot he beheld speeding twixt earth and heaven  
drawn by wing'd horses, and the charioteer thereon  
upright with eyes upon the goal and mind alert  
controlling his strong steeds, that spurn'd the drifted cloud  
as now they sank now mounted in their heav'nward flight.

Thus Plato recordeth—how Socrates told it  
to Phædrus on a summer morning, as they sat  
beneath a lofty plane-tree by the grassy banks  
of the Ilissus, talking of the passions of men. 10

The Vision of the Seer is Truth's Apocalypse,  
yet needeth for our aid a true interpreter.

The names of the two horses are SELFHOOD and BREED,  
the charioteer is REASON, and the whip in his hand  
is not to urge-on the steeds nor to incite their blood;  
their mettle is everlasting and they need no goad:  
He wieldeth it to make them ware of his presence  
and hold them obedient to the rein of his Will.  
But this picture drafted in Mind's creativ cave,  
and thence on the eye projected, thin is as the film 20  
of colour and shade on a canvas, ther is nought beneath:  
it telleth not who bred those wild horses, or broke  
their strong necks to the yoke, nor who builded the car,  
and harness'd them therto for its high heav'nly flight;  
nor how REASON ever mounted it in full career  
and took the reins, nor of what stuff intangible  
they are woven, those reins pictured so taut in his grasp;  
nay, for not he himself kenneth well of these things:  
Yet truly is he portray'd fearless and glad of heart,  
his lash circling o'erhead, as smiling on his steeds 30  
he speaketh to them lovingly in his praise or blame.

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Now these two horses, without which the wheels of Life  
would never hav had motion, and with them can hav no rest,  
are the animal instincts in the birthright of man;  
nor are they, as Plato fancied, one evil and one good:  
both are good, but of their wildness they are restiv both  
and wilful, nor wil yield mastery, unless they feel  
the hand of expert manage and good horsemanship.  
Selfhood is the elder and stronger; but Breed, once her foal,  
is livelier and of limb finer and more mettlesome, 40  
her rival now, and both wil pull together as one.

'Tis first to tell of Selfhood, since the first one thing,  
if ever a first thing wer, was of the Essence of Self.

Consider a plant—its life—how a seed faln to ground  
sucketh in moisture for its germinating cells,  
and as it sucketh swelleth, til it burst its case  
and thrusting its roots downward and spreading them wide  
taketh tenure of the soil, and from ev'ry raindrop  
on its dribbling passage to replenish the springs  
plundereth the freighted salt, while it pricketh upright 50  
with its flagstaff o'erhead for a place in the sun,  
anon to disengage buds that in tender leaves  
unfolding may inhale provender of the ambient air:  
and, tentacles or tendrils, they search not blindly  
but each one headeth straightly for its readiest prey;  
and haply, if the seed be faln in a place of darkness  
roof'd in by men—if ther should be any ray or gleam  
how faint soe'er, 'twil crane and reach its pallid stalk  
pushing at the crevice ev'n to disrupt the stones.

'Tis of such absolute selfhood that it knoweth not 60  
parent nor offspring, and will abuse advantage  
of primogeniture, with long luxuriant boughs  
crowding in vain-glory to overshadow and quell  
its younger brethren; while, as for its own children

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that, cradled on its branches, fell from its fruitage,  
'twil choke them when they strive to draw life at its feet.

Look now upon a child of man when born to light,  
how otherwise than a plant sucketh he and clutcheth?  
how with his first life-breath he clarioneth for food!  
craving as the blind fledgelings in a thrush's nest 70  
that perk their naked necks, stiff as a chimney-stack,  
food-funnels, like as hoppers in a corn-mill gaping  
for what supply the feeder may shovel in their throats.  
How differeth the new-born child from plant or fledgeling?

Among low organisms some are call'd animal  
for being unrooted, else inseparable from plants;  
yet each in his small motion is as a lion on prowl,  
or as a python gliding to seize and devour  
some weaker Self, whereby to fortify his own.  
And if Selfhood thus rule thru'out organic life 80  
'tis no far thought that all the dumb activities  
in atom or molecule are like phenomena  
of individuat Selfhood in its first degrees.

This Autarchy of Selfhood, which we blame not at all  
in plants and scarcely in brutes, is by Reason denounced  
heartless, and outlaw'd from the noble temper of man,  
the original sin and cause of half his woes and shames;  
whence Natur again would seem at variance with herself,  
misdoubting the foundation whereon she had built all,  
and seeing too late the fault threatening to split her house 90  
would buttress it with the outwork of an afterthought.  
But tho' 'tis only Reason can govern this horse,  
correction awaited not the human charioteer;  
Selfhood had of itself begotten its own restraint—  
like as small plague-microbes generate their own toxin  
in antidote of their own mischief (so 'tis said):  
Even among beasts of prey the bloody wolves, who found  
some selfish betterment from their hunting in packs,



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had thereby learn'd submission to a controlling will,  
their leader being so far charioteer of their rage; 100  
while pastoral animals, or ever a drover came  
to pen them for his profit, had in self-defence  
herded together; and on the wild prairies are seen  
when threaten'd by attack, congregating their young  
within their midst for safety, and then serrying their ranks  
in a front line compact to face the dreaded foe.

And this parental instinct, tho' it own cousinship  
with Breed, was born of Selfhood. A nursing mammal,  
since she must feel her suckling a piece of herself,  
wil self-preserve and shelter it as herself; and oft 110  
'tis hard to wean. So birds, by long brooding inured,  
wil watch their chickens heedfully, and fearfully attend  
their early excursions, guiding aiding and at need  
defending against danger. It is pretty to mark  
a partridge, when she hath first led forth her brood to run  
among the grass-tussocks or hay-stubbles of June,  
if man or beast approach them, how to usurp regard  
she counterfeith the terror of a wounded bird  
dragglng a broken wing, and noisily enticeth  
or provoketh the foe to follow her in a vain chase; 120  
nor wil she desist from the ruse of her courage  
to effect her own escape in loud masterful flight,  
untill she hav far decoy'd hunter or blundering hoof  
from where she has bid her little ones to scatter and hide.

In man this blind motherly attachment is the spring  
of his purest affection, and of all compassion,—  
the emotion most inimical to war: I deem  
its form of unimpeachable sincerity  
to be the mould wherein Friendship's full faith is cast.  
But richest fruits are tardy in ripening, and man's mind 130  
on the last topmost branch, fed from the deepest root,  
struggleth slowly to birth thru' long-enforced delay.

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See nature's habit now devolving upon man,  
and in his Reason her patience as virtue reborn.  
First will be many months of bodily helplessness,  
then many years ere the fine budding spirit uncloze.  
Wherewhile a new spiritual personality  
in its miraculous significance, the child  
is less the mother's own than a treasure entrusted,  
which she can never love too fondly or serve too well; 140  
Nay, rather is she possess'd by her own possession,  
and in her VITA NUOVA *such things are reveal'd*  
*that all she hath thought or done seemeth to her of small worth.*  
The unfathomable mystery of her awaken'd joy  
sendeth her daily to heaven on her knees in prayer:  
and watching o'er the charm of a soul's wondering dawn  
enamoureth so her spirit, that all her happiness  
is in her care for him, all hope in his promise;  
and his nobility is the dream-goal of her life.

In the sunshine of her devotion, her peace and joy 150  
are mirror'd in the child's mind, and would leave thereon  
no place for sin, could all be purified to attain;  
but in the most the mind is gross and the spirit bleak;  
and for a generation needing an outward sign  
of this transcendent mystery, 'twas well when Art  
fashioning a domestic symbol in worship of Christ  
pictured him as an infant in his Mother's arms,  
sharing with her his suffering and glory—it was well:  
Nor count I any scripture to be better inspired  
with eternal wisdom or by insight of man 160  
than the four words wherewith the sad penitent hymn  
calleth aloud on Mary standing neath the cross:  
EIA MATER, it saith, MATER FONDS AMORIS.

Leave Selfhood now in her fond sanctuary awhile  
with the unseen universe communing and entranced  
strangely:—As when a high moon thru' the rifted wrack

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gleameth upon the random of the windswept night;  
or as a sunbeam softly, on early worshippers  
at some rich shrine kneeling, stealeth thru' the eastern apse  
and on the clouded incense and the fresco'd walls 170  
mantleth the hush of prayer with a vaster silence,  
laden as 'twere with the unheard music of the spheres;  
—nay, incommunicable and beyond all compare  
are the rich influences of those moments of bliss,  
mocking imagination or pictured remembrance,  
as a divine dream in the vaulted slumber of life.

Leave we Selfhood now secretly under that nimbus,  
fashioning by nurtur in a new selfhood of spirit  
whatever in the redemption of beauty and dignity  
ennobleth the society or the person of man— 180  
leave that nursery awhile, and ask how Nature wrought  
where she with-held from life the gift of Motherhood.

The teeming progeny of such egg-breeding insects  
as multiply their children a thousandfold a day  
must lie close on the zero of parental bondage;  
nor can they be debarr'd by ignominy of rank  
or unlikeness of kind from vouching in this case:  
For among Bees and Ants are social systems found  
so complex and well-order'd as to invite offhand  
a pleasant fable enough: that once upon a time, 190  
or ever a man was born to rob their honeypots,  
bees wer fully endow'd with Reason and only lost it  
by ordering so their life as to dispense with it;  
whereby it pined away and perish'd of disuse,  
which, whether it wer or no, if men can judge of Bees,  
well might be in their strange manner of life—so alike it is  
with what our economical bee-minded men  
teach as the first intelligential principle  
of human government welfare and happiness:—

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Nay, some I have seen wil choose a beehive for their sign 200  
and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought,  
picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,  
a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;  
Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour  
is spiritual attainment, individual worth,  
at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,  
to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;  
not such material ease as might be attain'd for all  
by cheap production and distribution of common needs,  
wer all life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210  
Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,  
man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them  
how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake  
the maximum of toil that is found tolerable  
upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance;  
and stay from procréation at thatt just number of men,  
hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth  
under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.  
And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,  
life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220  
and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,  
lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:  
then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,  
the system wil be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy  
is thinking to distribute indivisibles,  
and make equality in things incommensurable:  
forged under such delusions, all Utopias  
are castles in the air or counsels of despair.  
So Plato, on whose infant lips—as it is told— 230  
bees settled where he lay slumbering in his cradle,  
and honour'd with their augury man's loan of praise—  
ev'n Plato, when he in fear and mistrust of Selfhood

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denyeth family life to his republicans,  
fell, bruized; tho' cautiously depicting Socrates  
reluctant to disclose the offensiv absurdum  
of his pretentious premiss—when, being forced to admit  
that in his free community of women and children  
no child would ken its parent, no parent his child,  
he sought to twist the bull's horns with a sophistry— 240  
arguing that mother's love and home-life being the source  
of such inestimable good, 'twere wise that law  
should forbid privat property in their benefits:  
Nay, so 'twould set his state above all other states,  
wer suchlike indispensable privileges  
rescued from ownership, and for the general use  
distributed equally among the citizens.  
For surely (said he) a bastard nursed in a bureau  
must love and reverence all women for its mothers;  
and likewise every woman, being in like default, 250  
would love all babies as her only son. May-be  
Plato was pleased to launch his whole Utopia  
safely in absolute dreamland; but poor Socrates,  
on whom he father'd it, was left *in nubibus*  
where Aristophanes in good jest had set him  
some twenty years afore: and our sophists, who lack  
claim to any shred of great Plato's glorious mantle  
of wisdom, hav secured a good lien on his bluff.

But yet to read the strange riddle of the hiving bees,  
their altruism and platonesque intelligence, 260  
'tis enough to suppose that their small separat selves  
are function'd by the same organic socialism  
and vital telepathy as the corpuscles are  
whereof their little bodies are themselves composed:  
that this cell-habit, spredd thru'out to a general sense,  
inspireth them in their corporat community.

## *Book II. Selfhood*

Consider the tiny egg-cell whence the man groweth,  
how it proliferateth freely, as a queen-bee doth,  
and more surely than any animal or plant breedeth;  
how each new offspring cell is for some special work 270  
differentiated and functioneth spontaneously,  
and ev'n wil change its predetermin'd faculty  
when accidental environment maketh a call,  
leaving its proper sphere to amend what hath gone wrong:  
Consider then their task, those unimaginable  
infin't co-adaptations of function'd tissue  
correlated delicately in a ravel'd web  
of unknown sensibilities . . how 'tis a task  
incomparable in complexity with whatsoe'er  
the bees can boast: nor do the unshapely cells behave 280  
with lesser show of will, nor of purpose and skill:  
Pass by the rarer achievements, yea, forget all fames,  
all works all art all virtue and knowledge—set them by,  
and still the solved problems must exhaust our wonder;  
Reason can bring no more; and it addeth nothing  
that the complete insect should in some part possess  
some of the faculties of its constituent cells.  
Or if this thing be deem'd in Natur anomalous,  
that perfect organisms with sense and motion endow'd  
should still behave to each other as link'd constructiv cells,  
yet outwardly to our eyes this freedom affordeth 290  
machinery wherupon common purpose can work:  
To the insect, order and disorder are exposed to sight;  
and so we think to see the little emmets confer  
and locking their antennæ immediatly transmit  
the instinctiv calls which each and all can feel; whereas  
the mutual fellowship of distributed cells  
hath so confounded thought that explanation is fetch'd  
from chemic agency: because in that science  
the reaction of unknown forces is described and summ'd 300  
in mathematic formulæ pregnant of truth,

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and of such universal scope that, being call'd laws,  
their mere description passeth for Efficient Cause.

Sometimes when slowly from the deep sleep of fatigue  
a man awakeneth, he lyeth for awhile amazed,  
aware of self and of his rested body, and yet  
knowing not where he is, bewilder'd, unable  
to interpret sight or sound, because the slumbering guards  
in Memory's Castle hav lagg'd at his summons  
for to let down the drawbridge and to uplift the gate: 310  
Anon with their deliverance he cometh again  
to usual cognisance of the things about him,  
life, and all his old familiar concepts of home.

So 'tis with any Manchild born into the world,  
so wondereth he awhile at the stuff of his home,  
so, tho' slowly and unconsciently, he remembereth.—  
The senses ministrant on his apperception  
are predisposed to the terrestrial influences,  
adapted to the environment where they took shape:  
With ease of long habit his lungs inhale the air, 320  
his eyes and skin welcome the sun, and his palate  
findeth assurance taking to the mother's milk:  
His muffling wraps, his frill'd and closely curtain'd cot  
and silken apparel of wealth are stranger things to him  
than the rough contacts wherefrom they are thought to shield  
him,

the everlasting companions of his lang syne;  
nor later wil he meet with any older acquaintance  
than Bees are; for his ancestors ere they wer men  
had pillaged the wild combs, and thru' untold ages  
hive-honey in cave and palace hath sweeten'd man's food: 330  
not all the flooding syrup from the East-Indian cane  
foster'd in the Antilles, Ohio and Illinois,  
in Java, Demerara or Jamaica can drown

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Hybla's renown, nor cheapen the honey of Narbonne:  
A jar of Hymettan from a scholar in Athens  
regaled our English laurel above all gifts to me,  
who hav come to wiser affection in my regard for bees,  
learning the secret purpose wherefor Nature plann'd  
their industry, and controll'd its fashion to subserve  
the beauty and fertility of her vegetant life, 340  
to enrich her blooms with colour and fructify her fruits,  
—which never a bee can guess, nor that the unwholesomeness  
of mixy pollen (a thing that so concerneth bees)  
was by the flowers contrived for their own benefit:—

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May,  
when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,  
nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;  
or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes  
that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage  
of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350  
of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her  
of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,  
while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur  
floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—  
or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells*  
the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,  
bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng  
in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues  
surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense  
blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360  
when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers  
dispense their daily task and determin its field;  
the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,  
as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.  
Unwitting tho' it is, this great labor of love  
in such kindly intimacy with nature's workings  
hath a genial beauty, the charm whereof lacketh  
to the hireling drudgery of our huge city hives.



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So for their happy demeanour and sweet ministry  
they wer ever admired of man, and won immortal place 370  
in divine story and in poetic fable and rhyme:  
Deem'd heav'nly visitants wer they, children of the air  
of no earthly engendering, under celestial laws  
living a life of wisdom pleasur and diligence,  
a model for the polity and society of men.

Alas, we hav seen too near the poor life of the Bee,  
how of the swarming workers that cluster'd to found  
the springtide colony and project its waxen walls  
not one liveth to sing her *nisi Dominus*,  
nor to rest from her labour, nor to enjoy the fruits. 380  
Forty days, six unsabbath'd weeks of fever'd toil,  
wasteth and wearieth out their little frames—in truth  
their eggs wer a mass-product, not design'd to endure,  
nor for themselves, but pennywise to serve a turn:—  
One by one they succumb on their lonely journeys,  
o'erladen above their strength, benighted or astray,  
entrapp'd by swooping beaks, or by hard hail laid low  
with broken wings, untill a frail remnant at last  
wearily welcoming the dim prescience of death  
seek their own cemetery, where their shriveling skins 390  
may lie together apart nor soil the hive; yet stil  
ever and ever as they fail, perish and disappear,  
new shifts of younger workers, born of later eggs,  
take-up the unresting labour, each in their turn content  
to keep hive clean, eggs plenty, and storeroom full.  
Thus passeth summer, and with her draggled pageantry  
they too giv o'er, and stay all business in the hive,  
and huddling upon the foodstore in their dark den  
by numb stagnation husband the low flicker of life,  
sustain'd by an unheard promise that their prison again 400  
shall feel the sun, and they with the brave buds of March  
shall drink the valiance of his steepening rays, they too

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be hearten'd to revive, and venturing forth renew  
the well-worn round of toil; wherein ther is no one point  
of true accomplishment, since the sweet honeycomb  
for which man thanketh them, is but their furnishment,  
the larder and nursery and provisional shelter  
wherein their forlorn hope, their last shift may hold out  
thru' the long sleepless night of winter's starving gloom.

And for their monarch Queen—an egg-casting machine,  
helpless without attendance as a farmer's drill, 411  
by bedels driven and gear'd and in the furrows steer'd,  
well-watch'd the while, and treated with respect and care  
so long as she run well, oil'd stoked and kept in trim;  
but if deranged she slacken in her depositing,  
she is dealt with as men scrap a worn-out seed-barrow,  
not worth the mending; new machines cost nought to bees.

Now when this story is with man's tender sentiment  
foolishly travestied, Nature wil seem malign:  
But bees—unless the Selfhood of the hive can feel— 420  
lack conscience of emotion, or hav no more than when,  
call'd by the sun to swarm in a bright morn of May,  
their agitated clamour and frolic flight would shew  
that some levity hath prick'd their cores: even as with us  
who feel the exhilaration of the voluptuous air  
that surgeth in our flesh to flood the soul, and ease  
our stiff behaviour; and to such happy influences  
swarming bees are responsiv and forget to sting:  
in which, as in their stranger mockeries of mankind,  
they are truly less like us than we are like to them. 430  
So all barbaric tyrants, who secure their throne  
by murder of rivals, hav their model in the Queen-bee;  
and the class-hate that kindleth in disorder'd times,  
when prosperity hath set envy and desire at war—  
'tis like the workers' annual massacre of the Drones:  
And even if some faint rebel mote of pleasure lurk

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in these fly-puppetries of human crime, 'tis plain  
that bees in their short life can hav so little joy  
and so much toil,—I say 'tis plain, that (if the things  
be comparable) then with the beehive compared  
the New-world slave-plantations wer abodes of bliss. 440

Me-seemeth in my poem these poor hive-bees fare  
as with an old black bear that hath climb'd on their tree  
in the American Adirondacks or Asian  
Himalaya, and clawing their comb, eateth it in,  
grubs, bees and honey and all: it is all one to him,  
for the brute is omnivorous and hath a sweet tooth.

Conscient Reason, the channel of man's spiritual joy,  
hath such dominant function also in bodily feeling  
that 'tis the measur of suffering in all animals, 450  
in lower forms negligible, and in the lowest  
pain can be felt no more than mid the dancing waves  
a pleasure-boat feeleth the hand on her tiller  
that keepeth-up her head to th' wind and her sails full.  
And of spiritual pain the most cometh again  
thru' Reason, whether of frailty or of imperfection:—  
Savagery hath the throes; and ah! in tender years  
the mind of childhood knoweth torments of terror,  
fears incommunicable, unconsolable,  
vague shapes; tho' oft they be the dread boding of truth, 460  
against which man's full Reason at grips may wrestle in vain.  
Yet for the gift of his virgin intelligence  
a child is ever our nearest pictur of happiness:  
'tis a delight to look on him in tireless play  
attentively occupied with a world of wonders,  
so rich in toys and playthings that naked Nature  
wer enough without the marvelous inventory of man;  
wherewith he togeth no less, and learning soon the lore  
of cypher and alphabet anon getteth to con

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the fair scholarly comment that science hath penn'd 470  
glossing the mazy hieroglyph of Nature's book;  
and as he ever drinketh of the living waters  
his spirit is drawn into the stream and, as a drop  
commingled therewith, taketh of birthright therein  
as vast an heritage as his young body hath  
in the immemorial riches of mortality.

And now full light of heart he hath willingly pass'd out  
thru' the sword-gates of Eden into the world beyond:  
He wil be child no more: in his revel of knowledge  
all the world is his own: all the hope of mankind 480  
is sharpen'd to a spearpoint in his bright confidence,  
as he rideth forth to do battle, a Chevalier  
in the joyous travail of the everlasting dawn:

Ther is nought to compare then, truly nought to compare:  
and wer not Fortune fickle in her lovingkindness,  
all wer well with a man—for his life is at flower,  
nor hath he any fear: *πόθεν θανάτου νῦν*  
*μνημονεύσειεν ἂν ἐν ἀκμῇ τοσαύτῃ?*

But since her favor is inscrutable and uncertain,  
and of her multiplicity she troubleth not 490  
at the interaction of diverse self-consequences,  
ther wil be blastings and blightings of hope and love,  
and rude shocks that affray; yet to the enamour'd soul  
evil is irrelevant and wil be brush'd aside:  
rather 'tis as with Art, wherein special beauty  
springeth of obstacles that have been overcome  
and to graces transform'd; so too the lover in life  
wil make obstructions serve, and from all resistance  
gain strength: his reconcilment with suffering is eased  
by fellow-suffering, and in pride of his calling 500  
good warriorship welcometh the challenge of death.

Beneath the spaceless dome of the soul's firmament  
he liveth in the glow of a celestial fire,  
fed by whose timeless beams our small obedient sun

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is as a cast-off satellite, that borroweth  
from the great Mover of all; and in the light of light  
man's little works, strewn on the sands of time, sparkle  
like cut jewels in the beatitude of God's countenance.

But heav'nward tho' the chariot be already mounted,  
'tis Faith alone can keep the charioteer in heart— 510  
Nay, be he but irresolute the steeds wil rebel,  
and if he looketh earthward they wil follow his gaze;  
and ever as to earth he neareth, and vision cleareth  
of all that he feareth, and the enemy appeareth  
waving triumphant banners on the strongholds of ill,  
his mirroring mind wil tarnish, and mortal despair  
possess his soul: then surely Nature hath no night  
dark as thatt black darkness that can be felt: no storm  
blind as the fury of Man's self-destructiv passions,  
no pestilence so poisonous as his hideous sins. 520

Thus men in slavery of sorrow imagin ghastly creeds,  
monstrous devilry, abstractions of terror, and wil *look*  
*to death's benumbing opium as their only cure,*  
or, seeking proudly to ennoble melancholy  
by embracement, wil make a last wisdom of woe:  
*They lie in Hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them;*  
whose prophet sage and preacher is the old Ecclesiast  
pseudo-Solomon, who cryeth in the wilderness,  
calling all to baptism in the Slough of Despond:  
VANITAS VANITATUM, OMNIA VANITAS. 530

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THE Spartan General BRASIDAS, the strenuous man,  
who earn'd historic favour from his conquer'd foe,  
once caught a mouse foraging in his messbasket  
among the figs, but when it bit him let it go,  
praising its show of fight in words that Plutarch judged  
worth treasuring; and since I redd the story at school  
unto this hour I hav never thought of Brasidas  
and cannot hear his name, but that I straightway see

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a table and an arm'd man smiling with hand outstretch'd  
above a little mouse that is scampering away. 540

Why should this thing so hold me ? and why do I welcome  
now

the tiny beast, that hath come running up to me  
as if here in my cantos he had spied a crevice,  
and counting on my friendship would make it his home ?

'Tis such a pictur as must by mere beauty of fitness  
convince natural feeling with added comfort.  
The soldier seeth the instinct of Selfhood in the mouse  
to be the same impulse that maketh virtue in him.  
For Brasidas held that courage ennobleth man,  
and from unworth redeemeth, and that folk who shrink 550  
from ventur of battle in self-defence are thereby doom'd  
to slavery and extinction: and so this mouse, albeit  
its little teeth had done him a petty hurt, deserved  
liberty for its courage, and found grace in man.

I had disliked Brasidas if he had kill'd the mouse:  
needless taking of life putteth Reason to shame,  
and men so startle at bloodshed that all homicide  
may to a purist seem mortal pollution of soul;  
a mystical horror of it may rule in him so strong,  
that rather than be slayer he would himself be slain: 560  
But fatherhood dispenseth with this vain taboo:  
the duty of mightiness is to protect the weak:  
and since slackness in duty is unto noble minds  
a greater shame and blame than any chance offence  
ensuing on right conduct, this hath my assent,—  
that where ther is any savagery ther will be war:  
the warrior therefore needeth no apology.

CHILDREN, for all their innocency and gentleness,  
in their unreason'd Selfhood think no scorn of war,  
but practise mimicry of it in their merry games, 570  
like puppies that would learn their fighting tricks betimes;

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and a Duke's well-bred cubs win romantic escape  
from their palatial mansion, hiding in the woods  
where they may scream and weave their raw wigwams, and  
don

the feathery tinsel and warpaint of the Cherokees.

My little chorister, who never miss'd a note,—  
I mark'd him how when prayers wer ended he would take  
his Bible, and in his corner ensconced would sit and read  
with unassumed devotion. What was it fetch'd him ?  
Matthew Mark Luke and John was it ? The parables, 580  
the poetry and passion of Christ ? Nay 'twas the bloody books  
of Jewish war, the story of their Judges and Kings;  
lured by those braggart annals, while he conn'd the page  
the parson's mild discourse pass'd o'er his head unheard.  
For Coverdale in his grand English truly built  
a temple fair as thatt Ionic fane, wherein  
neath his nine-column'd portico of all history  
Herodotus sitteth statued; and like the Jew  
the naive Greek chronicler discovereth God's purpose  
guiding his chosen race to terrestrial glory. 590

Nor hath any other nation any better argument  
whether it be forged or filch'd, invented or stolen;  
and their historians all are as children in this,  
and eagerly from battlefield to battlefield  
jaunt on their prancing pens after their man of war,  
who carveth the Earth into new kingdoms, as a cake  
is sliced for grabbing school-boys at a teaparty:  
and in their exaltation of dread and derringdo,  
prowess is magnified and cruelty condoned;  
whence smaller nations, as the Portuguese, require 600  
to multiply tenfold the tale of combatants,  
ere they deem any event worthy of their pictured pride.  
Parisian vanity reposeth thus today  
on Buonaparte's fame; for Alexander and he  
are kings of kings and lords of lords, the conquerors

## *Book II. Selfhood*

of conquerors all; dwarfing rude rivals whensoe'er,  
Alaric, Tamurlane, Attila and Zingis Khan,  
once names of terror and furious bombast, foremost men  
humbled, as wer the seventy kings who with their thumbs  
and their great toes cut off, finger'd the crumbs beneath 610  
Adonibezek's table, untill Jew Simeon came  
and did the same by him to my chorister's joy.

And since all earthly EMPIRE hath taken origin  
from bloody invasion, man for himself would fashion  
his sanction and examplar in the kingdom of heav'n;  
Thus hundred-handed giants, swarming from chaos  
to exalt the glory of Zeus, barricaded his throne,  
uprooting mountains in titanic rebellion.  
So hath the Church utter'd like false moneys for Christ  
with Godhead's image stamp'd, and pass'd it on the folk 620  
who, shadow'd in the murk of vulgar vainglories,  
wil prick their ears to hear how "Ther was war in Heav'n,  
and Michael and his Angels (like knights of romance)  
fought with the Dragon": tho' Almighty hath nought to gain,  
and by sovran oppression exalteth only his foe  
in tragic sympathy, as with Milton's great devil,  
against infinit odds confronting undismay'd  
inevitable ruin; or old Methusalah  
who when the flood rose higher swam from peak to peak  
til, with the last wild beasts tamed in their fear, he sat 630  
watching the whelm of water on topmost Everest,  
as thatt too was submerged; while in his crowded ark  
Noah rode safely by: and sailors caught by storm  
on the wide Indian Ocean at shift of the monsoon,  
hav seen in the dark night a giant swimmer's head  
that on the sequent billows trailing silvery hair  
at every lightning flash reappeareth in place,  
out-riding the tempest, as a weather-bound barque  
anchor'd in open roadstead lifteth at the seas.



## *The Testament of Beauty*

And POETRY in her task of adorning spirit, 640  
trustful also and faithful to the instincts of man,  
honoureth ever the steeds above the charioteer.  
She once would favour Selfhood, but 'tis now the foal;  
and learning sapphic languor in the labour of love,  
the Muse hath doff'd her armour for a silken robe:  
yet in her swooning luxury she hath never match'd  
nor dethroned bearded Homer's great epic of war;  
altho' thatt siege of Troy was in the beginning  
wrath and concupiscence, and in the end thereof  
tragedy so tearful that no mind can approve, 650  
nor any gentle heart take comfort in the event.

But these and all old tales of far-off things, bygoness  
of long-ago whereof memory still holdeth shape,  
Time and the Muse hav purged of their unhappiness;  
with their bright broken beauty they pervade the abyss,  
peopling the Solitude with gorgeous presences:  
as those bare lofty columns, time-whiten'd relics  
of Atlantean adoration, upstanding lone  
in Baalbec or Palmyra, proudly affront the waste  
and with rich thought atone the melancholy of doom. 660

Yet since of all, whatever hath once been, evil or good,  
tho' we can think not of it and remember it not,  
nothing can wholly perish; so ther is no birthright  
so noble or stock so clean, but it transmitteth dregs,  
contamination at core of old brutality;  
inchoate lobes, dumb shapes of ancient terror abide:  
tho' fading still in the oceanic deeps of mind  
their eyeless sorrows haunt the unfathom'd density,  
dulling the crystal lens of prophetic vision,  
crippling the nerve that ministereth to trembling strength,  
distorting the features of our nobility: 671  
And we, living at prime, what is it now to us  
how our forefathers dream'd, suffer'd, struggled, or wrought?  
how thru' the obliterated æons of man's ordeal

## *Book II. Selfhood*

unnumber'd personalities separatly endured ?  
Think not to explore, estimate and accumulate  
those infinit dark happenings into a single view  
that might affect feeling with true judgment of thought:  
Imagination, that would set science that task,  
is as the astronomer who, with peduncled eye 680  
screw'd here or there at some minutest angle-space  
of the wide heav'ns, thinketh by piecemeal reckoning  
to pictur and comprehend the illimitable worlds  
thronging eternity; his highest fantasy  
is like an athlete's dream that he hath lept off the globe,  
when all his waking power is to jump-up and fall  
the height of his own head—all that the best can do.

Wer it not then well to enquire of Reason, ere we admit  
her condemnation of War, seeing it so firmly entrench'd  
in the immemorial practice and good favour of man, 690  
whence hath she fetch'd her high authority, her right  
of spiritual judgment ? WHENCE THEN COMETH WISDOM ?

But I was anger'd with myself to hav said this thing,  
seeing that my thought had wander'd; for Reason reply'd  
"This question is wrongly ask'd. Who is it that putteth  
"this question into my mouth, and biddeth me answer him ?—  
"I who hav never doubted of my authority,  
"who am the consciousness of things judging themselves—  
"Hav I not learn'd that Selfhood is fundamental  
"and universal in all individual Being; 700  
"and that thru' Motherhood it came in animals  
"to altruistic feeling, and thence-after in men  
"rose to spiritual affection ? What then am I  
"in my conscience of self but very consciousness  
"of spiritual affection upgrown to life in me ?  
"Truly inscrutable and dark is the Wisdom of God,  
"but no man cometh unto wisdom but by me."

## The Testament of Beauty

Then was I shamed: but still my thought went harking  
back

on its old trail, whence Reason learn'd its troublous task  
to comprehend aright and wisely harmonise 710

the speechless intuitions of the inconscient mind;  
which, tho' a naked babe (as men best pictured Christ)

is yet in some sort nearer to the Omniscient  
than man's unperfect Reason, baulk'd as thatt must be  
by the self-puzzledom of introspection and doubt.

Thatt dark mind with its potency is the stuff of life,  
nature's immutable provision: in some maybe,

stagnant and poor, in some activ and rich, in each  
a given unique quantum of personality,

a loan of so-much (as 'tis writ *to one he gave  
five talents, to another two and to another one*); 720

a treasure that can be to good fortune assured  
by Reason, its determinant and inexplicable  
coefficient, that varieth also in power and worth.

For I think not of Reason as men thought of Adam,  
created fullgrown, perfect in the image of God;  
but as a helpless nursling of animal mind,  
as a boy with his mother, unto whom he oweth  
more than he ever kenneth or stayeth to think, language,  
knowledge, grace, love and those ideal aims whereby 730  
his manly intelligence cometh to walk alone.

But how, in this independence and pride, I ask,  
how can this younger born stand off so far apart,  
clear of all else, that by the mere conscience of things  
he can be judge of all and of himself to boot?

For that I find him oftentimes servant and drudge:  
as 'tis seen in the true hermeneutic of ART,  
whereof all excellence upspringeth of itself,  
like a rare fruit upon some gifted stock, ripening  
on its arch-personality of inborn faculty, 740  
without which gift creativ Reason is barren; altho'

## *Book II. Selfhood*

it will collaborate actively and eagerly  
with various governance, which appeareth in some  
as happy selection and delighted approval  
of spiritual nativities, that teem i' the mind,  
surging to escape, like to wild bubbles in a pot  
when the red fire beneath bristleth, and tortureth  
the water to airy ebullience;—or in another  
as toilsom evolution of larval germs, which yet  
transform while confidently it laboureth thereat 750  
slowly as a modeller in clay. How in its naked self  
Reason wer powerless showeth when philosophers  
wil treat of Art, the which they are full ready to do,  
having good intuition that their master-key  
may lie therein: but since they must lack vision of Art  
(for otherwise they had been artists, not philosophers)  
they miss the way; and ev'n the Greeks themselves, supreme  
in making as in thinking, never of their own art  
found the true hermeneutick; and the first insight  
of the twin-gifted Plato was to Aristotle 760  
a crude offence; for Plato said that earthly things,  
whether material objects or abstract notions,  
wer shadows of Ideas laid up in God's house,  
— a dainty dish for the sophistic banqueters.  
And yet this delicat doctrin, that held no shield  
to Zeno's lancing logic, took not hurt at heart  
from any mortal assault, but liveth in the schools  
with flourish'd head serene, high and invulnerable;—  
because the absurdity of indefinable forms  
is less than the denial of existence to thought: 770  
and truly if all existence is expression of Mind,  
ideas must themselves be truer existences  
than whatever else, and in such thought their nearest name.

Powers unseen and unknown are the fountains of life:  
no animal but kenneth that sunlight is warm;

## *The Testament of Beauty*

no dog but shifteth posture with the shifting shade  
reasonably as we: but man maketh a dial for it  
to measur his day, and by his abstract intellect  
hath taken it for the source and very cause of life  
then by science unraveling its physical rays 780  
he hath separated some, and found some properties;  
but of the whole he knoweth that his analysis  
hath not approach'd the secret of their living power.  
Nor hath man ever a doubt that mere objects of sense  
affect his mental states, nor that the mind in turn  
promoteth the action and function of his animal life  
in its organs and bones. The Greek astronomer,  
gazing with naked eye into the starry night,  
forgot his science and, in transport of spirit,  
his mortal lot. Then seem'd it to him as if his feet 790  
touch'd earth no longer: ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτῶ Ζανί  
said he, in the treasur'd words that keep his joy from death,  
θεοτρεφέος πίμπλαμαι ἀμβροσίης.

Now this imagination of awe and ecstasy,  
being proper and common in Man, and where lacking or dull  
so ready to suggestion, it seemeth as tho' the eye  
had some spiritual vision—as if the idea of Space  
and also of God existed in the midnight skies;  
and thus men came to think that their corporeal sense  
encounter'd reality in the appearance of things; 800  
and, stirr'd by influences that outreaching Reason  
kindled unknown desires, their awed souls fell to prayer  
that the great Maker of All would reveal his Being.

If so be then that Reason, our teacher in all the schools,  
owneth to existences beyond its grasp, whereon  
its richer faculties depend, and that those powers  
are ever present influencing the unconscious mind  
in its native function to inspire the Will, 'twould seem  
that as the waken'd mind fashion'd to'ard intellect  
so the dark workings of his animal instincts 810

## Book II. Selfhood

faced in a new perspectiv to'ard spiritual sight;  
and thus man's trouble came of their divergency.  
For spiritual perception vague and uncontroll'd  
being independent of the abstract intelligence,  
he is disconcerted twixt their rival promises,  
and, doubtful of his road, he wavereth following  
now one now the other: and thus I stand where I conclude  
that man's true wisdom were a reason'd harmony  
and correlation of these divergent faculties:  
this wer the bridge which all men who can see the abyss 820  
hav reasonably and instinctivly desired to build; —  
and all their sacraments and mysteries whatsoe'er  
attempt to build it; from devout Pythagoras  
to th' last psychologist of Nancy or of Vienna.

And between spiritual emotion and sensuous form  
the same living compact maketh our Art, wherein  
material appearances engage the soul's depth;  
and if in men untrain'd without habit of thought  
the ear is more æsthetic than the eye is, this cometh  
from thatt sense being the earlier endow'd in animals 830  
who, tho' they be all vacant in a picture-gallery  
nor see themselves in a mirror, attend to music  
and yield to fascination or vague wonder thereat.  
So if we, changing Plato's old difficult term,  
should rename his Ideas Influences, ther is none  
would miss his meaning nor, by nebulous logic,  
wish to refute his doctrin that indeed ther are  
eternal Essences that exist in themselves,  
supreme efficient causes of the thoughts of men.

*What is Beauty? saith my sufferings then.*—I answer 840  
the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:  
Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,  
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense

## *The Testament of Beauty*

wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man: '

And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty,  
awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit  
in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

But highest Art must be rare as nativ faculty is  
and her surprise of magic winneth favor of men  
more than her inspiration: most are led away 850  
by fairseeming pretences, which being wrought for gain  
pursue the ephemeral fashion that assureth it;  
and their thin influences are of the same low grade  
as the unaccomplish'd forms; their poverty is exposed  
when they would stake their charm on ethic excellence;  
for then weak simulations of virtues appear,  
such as convention approveth, but not Virtue itself,  
tho' not void of all good: and (as I read) 'twas this  
that Benvenuto intended, saying that not only  
Virtue was memorable but things so truly done 860  
that they wer like to Virtue; and thus prefaced his book,  
thinking to justify both himself and his works.

The authority of Reason therefor relieth at last  
hereon—that her discernment of spiritual things,  
the ideas of Beauty, is her conscience of instinct  
upgrown in her (as she unto conscience of all  
upgrew from lower to higher) to conscience of Beauty  
judging itself by its own beauteous judgment.

And of War she would say: it ranketh with those things  
that are like unto virtue, but not virtue itself: 870  
rather, in the conscience of spiritual beauty, a vice  
that needeth expert horsemanship to curb, yet being  
nativ in the sinew of selfhood, the life of things,  
the pride of animals, and virtue of savagery,  
so long as men be savage such it remaineth;  
and mid the smoke and gas of its new armoury  
still, with its tatter'd colours and gilt swords of state,  
retaineth its old glory untarnish'd—heroism,

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self-sacrifice, disciplin, and those hardy virtues  
of courage honour'd in Brasidas, without which  
man's personality wer meaner than the brutes.

880

Who hath not known this pictur?—on a hot afternoon  
of our high summer in August at the country-seat  
of some vext politician, if in their flashing cars  
the county-folk gather to his holiday garden,  
where for their entertainment he hath outspread the lawns  
with tents and furnish'd tables, flags and tennis-nets,—  
if haply he hav set up to dignify his grounds  
a classic statue of marble, fetch'd by ship from Greece,  
that standeth there in true ideal nakedness  
mid parasols and silks, how with blank shadow'd eyes  
it looketh off from all those aimless idlers there  
that flaunt around, now and again blurting perchance  
a shamefast shallow tribute to its beauteous presence!  
—'tis very like among common concourse of men,  
who twixt care of comfort and zeal in wordly affairs  
hav proved serving two masters the vanity of both,  
when a true soldier appeareth, one compact at heart  
of sterner virtues and modesty of maintenance,  
mute witness and martyr of spiritual faith, a man  
ready at call to render his life to keep his soul.

890

900

*All virtues is in her shape so lovely*, that at sight  
her lover is enamour'd even of her nativ face.  
And here I part from Aristotle, agreeing else  
that a good disposition is Goddes happiest gift,  
without which, as he addeth, Virtue is unteachable,  
but in minds well-disposed may be by Reason upbuilt:  
“no man cometh (said she) unto wisdom but by me”  
But when he would exalt this guiding principle  
to be thatt part whereby we are in likeness with God,  
whose Being (saith he) lieth in the unbroken exercise  
of absolute intellect—which for their happiness

910



## *The Testament of Beauty*

mankind should strive to attain—I halt thereat: and this  
marreth my full accord where, in a famous text  
he hath made Desire to be the Prime Mover of all:  
because the arch-thinker's heav'n cannot move my desire,  
nor doth his pensiv Deity make call on my love.  
I see the emotion of saints, lovers and poets all  
to be the kindling of some Personality  
by an eternizing passion; and that God's worshipper 920  
looking on any beauty falleth straightway in love;  
and thatt love is a fire in whose devouring flames  
all earthly ills are consumed, and at least flash of it,  
be it only a faint radiancy, the freed soul glimpseth,  
nay ev'n may think to have felt, some initiat foretaste  
of thatt mystic rapture, the consummation of which  
is the absorption of Selfhood in the Being of God.

Ideas and influences spiritually discern'd  
are of their essence pure: but in the lot of man  
nothing is wholly pure; yet all hindrance to good 930  
—be good and evil two in love or one in strife—  
maketh occasion for it, by contrast heightening,  
by challenge and revelly arousing Virtue to act.  
Hence 'twill not be with men only of contention and hate,  
nor only with the ambitious and disorderly  
that combat findeth favor; honest men good and true  
who seek peace and ensue it, seeing war as the field  
for exercise of spirit that else might fust unused,  
embrace the good, and cavil not the inherent terms,  
rather welcoming hardship; which by affraying cowards 940  
purgeth heroic ranks, and battle rallieth all  
keen-hearted sportsmen and the brave gamesters of life,  
adventurers whose joy danceth on peril's edge,  
for whom life hath no relish save in danger of death;  
who love sport for its hazard, and of all their sports

## *Book II. Selfhood*

where hazard is at highest look to find the best  
there on the field where hourly they may stake their all.  
And 'tis because they feel their spirit's ecstasy  
is owing in nought to Reason, but exultantly  
blendeth with the old Selfhood wherefrom it sprang—'tis thus  
they can be friendly at heart with nature's heartlessness, 951  
nor heed the wrongs and cruelties that come and pass,  
overlook'd as by men who hav suffer'd not nor seen.

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence  
to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death,  
and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—  
we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,  
sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,  
horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,  
dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960  
yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;  
and memory is so complacent that we well may fear  
lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,  
regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,  
hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain  
the trenches, and reclothed the devastated lands.

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted  
rëentering hath possess'd her desolated halls;  
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd  
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and games,  
their live abounding mirth rëechoing from the walls, 971  
where among antique monuments their brothers' names  
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not  
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory  
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh  
find health in mutilation: as if our agony  
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance  
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,

## *The Testament of Beauty*

and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself      980  
disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate  
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,  
the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right  
prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick  
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities,  
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood  
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd  
the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,  
desperatly unrepentant to the "scourge of God",  
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies      990  
punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,  
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul  
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor stay;  
for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed  
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness;  
so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,  
our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city  
my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice  
was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear      1000  
than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

## BOOK III

### BREED

HAVING told of SELFHOOD, ere now I tell of BREED  
the younger of the two Arch-Instincts of man's nature,  
'twere well here to remember how these pictured steeds  
are Ideas construed by the abstract Intellect.

Whatever abode Philosophy thinketh to build,  
to erect a lofty temple that may shrine her faith,  
crowning the unvisited holiness of the hills,  
or thrust her fair façade amid the noisy dens  
of swarming Industry, to invite the sons of toil,  
all altitude expanse or grandeur of building 10  
subsisteth on foundations buried out of sight,  
which yet the good architect carrieth ever in mind,  
and keepeth the draft by him stored in his folios.  
So herein 'twas laid down what footing Reason plann'd;—  
divining Purpose in Natur, it abstracted first  
her main intentions, and subsumeth under each  
the old animal passions ancillary thereto,  
tho' in Nature's economy the same impulse  
may work to divers ends, as demonstrably is seen  
in the appetite of hunger, which prime in selfhood 20  
promoteth no less all living activities,  
so universal that some thinkers would make it  
a corner-stone, and mixing other like fabric  
build thereon confidently, albeit for such deep trust  
unfit, being in itself a thing of no substance.

And truly PLEASUR IN FOOD, common to all animals  
that can feel pleasure, comforting the incessant toil  
of sustenance to enable their blind energies,  
when once it findeth conscience in the Reason of man  
is posited by folly as an end-in-itself; 30

## *The Testament of Beauty*

til by sensuous refinement it usurpeth rank  
beside his intellectual and spiritual joys,—  
a road whereon the brutes already had broken ground  
(trespassing somewhat haply on nature's allotments),  
for a Tyger, when once he hath tasted human flesh,  
in pursuit of his prey is more dangerous to men  
and chooseth daintily among them; like those cannibals  
who yet, for all their courtesy (so travelers tell)  
and Spartan stoicism, gaily devour their kind.

From the terrifying jungle of his haunted childhood 40  
where prehistoric horror stil lurketh untamed,  
man by slow steps withdrew, and from supply of need  
fell to pursuit of pleasur, untill his luxury  
supplanting brutality invented a new shame;  
for with civilization a caste of cooks was bred,  
not specialized in structure—as with bees or ants—  
but serviceable of either sex and disciplin'd  
in such cultur'd tradition that the grammar of it  
would stock a library; nor are their banquets spredd 50  
to please the palate only; the eye is invited  
by dainty disguises and the nostril with scents,  
nay ev'n the ear is fed, and on the gather'd guests  
a trifling music playeth, dispelling all thought,  
that while they fill the belly, the empty mind may float  
lightly in the full moonshine of o'erblown affluence.  
Thus, when in London city a Guild of merchants dine,  
one dinner's cost would ease a whole bye-street of want,  
its broken meats outface Christ's thrifty miracle.

But tho' of its mere sensual smirch the scene be cleansed  
at fashionable tables, where delicat guests 60  
sit and play with their food inattentively, as 'twere  
in their relaxation an accidental relish  
to the intellectual banter and familiar discourse  
of social entertainment—a thing overlook'd

### *Book III. Breed*

among the agreeable superfluities of life,  
trifles good in themselves, and no more censurable  
than the fine linen of Ulysses and the brooch  
that Penelope gave him, nor the rangled shroud  
that she wove for his sire, nor any work of price  
that humbly doeth honor unto any temple of God— 70  
yet this amenity of Mammon is to the epicure  
mere disgust, a farrago of incongruous kickshaws,  
a hazardous pampering, as barbarously remote

from pleasure's goal as pothouse cheese and ale.  
For Reason once engaged on the æsthetic of food  
refineth every means, as those painters in oil  
who all their sunless days sat labouring to attain  
a chiaroscuro of full colour—so the epicure;  
nor planneth he his creation with a less regard 80  
to grandiose composition, in a scheme of morsels  
gradated to provoke and stimulate alike  
digestion and appetite; and each viand married  
with a congenial wine, and each wine in itself  
a sublimation of fancy, a radiant riotous juice,  
and of such priceless rarity as no man can come  
but by luck and genius to possess such bottles.

And here the Voluptuary may think his anchor  
hath bitten on truth; for surely nothing in nature  
fulfilleth more various expectancies of sense  
that his wine doth; to the eye luminous as rich gems 90  
engendering thru' long æons in the bowels of earth;  
to the nostrils reminiscent as subtle odours  
of timorous wind-wavering flowers; to the taste  
beyond all savours ravishing, insatiable,  
yet wholesome as is the incense of forested pines,  
when neath their scorching screens they fume the slumberous  
air;

and to the mind exhilarating, expelling care,  
even as those well-toned viols, matured by time, which once,

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when the Muse visited Italy to prepare  
a voice of beauty for the joy of her children, 100  
wer fashion'd by Amati and Stradivari and still,  
treasured in their mellow shapelinesses, fulfil  
the genius of her omnipotent destiny,—  
speaking with incantation of strange magic to charm  
the dreams that yet undreamt lurk in the unfathom'd deep  
of mind, unfeatur'd hopes and loves and dim desires,  
uttermost forms of all things that shall be.

'Tis thus by the live firework of his wine allured  
that the epicure thinketh he hath wherewithal to pave  
thru' palate and gullet a right path for his soul, 110  
each feast as a symphonic poem, preluding  
to melodious Andante Scherzo and final Fugue,—  
a microcosm, as those musical pæans are  
that perish not in the using, but persist  
strengthening their immortality while millions feed  
on their unquenchable loveliness evermore.

In such fine artistry of his putrefying pleasures  
he indulgeth richly his time untill the sad day come  
when he retireth with stomach Emeritus  
to ruminate the best devour'd moments of life; 120  
like any old fox-hunter his good days with the hounds,  
any angler or cricketer, for he too hath follow'd  
his sport to himself, and each good day of sport (and thatt  
the dog knoweth and enjoyeth with his Master as well)  
is a thing in itself, whole even as life is one.

This is the supreme ecstasy of the mountaineer,  
to whom the morn is bright, when with his goal in sight,  
some icepeak high i' the heav'ns, he is soul-bounden for it,  
prospecting the uncertain clue of his perilous step  
to scale precipices where no foot clomb afore, 130  
for good or ill success to his last limit of strength;  
his joy in the doing and his life in his hand  
he glorieth in the fortunes of his venturous day;

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'mid the high mountain silences, where Poesy  
*lieth in dream* and with *the secret strength of things*  
*that governs thought* inhabiteth, where man wandereth  
into God's presence:—But what heav'nly or earthly Muse  
attendeth the epicure? Nay, what man deigneth ear  
to his grovelling tale? His gluttony rotteth and stinketh  
in the dust-bin of Ethick.—Howso thatt may be, 140  
the thing cometh of Self, as War doth; and hereby  
'twere well to note how some would derive War from Breed,  
tho' sex is but the occasion, when jealousy of love  
provoketh Selfhood to anger: indeed Herodotus,  
seeking the root-cause of the implacable enmity  
'twixt Hellenes and Asiatics to convey his book,  
dresseth up a frontispiece of four royal rapes,  
of Io and Medea, Europa and Helen of Troy,  
playing no doubt upon the flair of his hearers,  
who love him stil for his good faith in his fables. 150

YET our distinction is proper and holdeth fast. Now BREED  
is to the race as SELFHOOD to the individual;  
and these two prime Instincts as they differ in purpose  
are independent each from other, and separat  
as are the organic tracts in the animal body  
whereby they function; and tho' Breed is needful alike  
to plants as to animals, yet its apparatus  
is found in animals of a more special kind;  
and since race-propagation might hav been assured  
without differentiation of sex, we are left to guess 160  
nature's intention from its full effects in man:  
and such matter is the first that wil follow hereon.

Remembering my dissension from Spinoza here,  
I think of him, Bruno's pupil, *ὑψίπολις*  
*ἄπολις*, in his pride at his bench intently



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shaping his lenses, and how he in that irksome toil  
to earn his bread, the while he ponder'd his great book,  
was perfecting the tool that invited science  
to ever minuter anatomy, untill she took skill  
to handle invisibles; and lately upon that path 170  
hath divined, in the observed fertilization of plants,  
atomic mechanism with unlimited power  
to vary the offspring in character, by mutual  
inexhaustible interchange of transmitted genes;  
a theory on such wide experiment upbuilt  
that the enrichment of species may be assumed to be  
the purpose of nature in the segregation of sex.  
Yet this new knowledge throweth no light on our way  
to a purposeful and wise selfbreeding of mankind  
which, could it be, would then responsibly overrule 180  
all indiscriminate mating: tho' from such ordeal  
our hybrid wisdom well might shrink: rather we see  
complexity irresoluble in obscurity:

So may we still follow our instinctive preferences  
unrebuked, and in love of Beauty affirm our faith  
that our happiest espousals are nature's free gift.

And the origin of sex lieth yet in that darkness  
where all origins are—since definition of links  
within our causal chain advanceth us no way  
in sensible approachment to the first Cause of all: 190  
we are happy in our discoveries as a child thinketh  
he is nearer to the Pole-star when he is put to bed:  
yet, tracing backwards in the story of sex, the steps  
of our carpeted staircase are familiar and strong.

First among lowest types of life we think to find  
no separation of sex: plants in the next degree  
show differentiation at puberty with some signs  
of mutual approachment: next in higher animals  
an early differentiation, and at puberty  
periodic appetite with mutual attraction 200

### *Book III. Breed*

sometimes engaging Beauty: then at last in man  
all these same characters promoted and strengthen'd  
to a constant conscient passion, by Reason transform'd  
to'ard altruistic emotion and spiritual love.

Breed then together with Selfhood steppeth in pair,  
for as Self grew thru' Reason from animal rage  
to vice of war and gluttony, but meanwhile uprose  
thru' motherly yearning to a profounder affection,  
so Breed, from like degrading brutality at heart,  
distilleth in the altruism of spiritual love 210  
to be the sublimest passion of humanity,  
with parallel corruption; in its supremacy  
confess'd of all, since all in their degree hav felt  
its divine exaltation and bestial abasement.  
It hath sanctified fools and degraded heroes;  
and tho' the warrior wil lightly leave his lady  
to join in battle (so the weight of the elder horse  
side-wrencheth at the yoke), he wil return to her  
more gladly, and often rue his infidelity.

In higher natures, poetic or mystical, 220  
sense is transfigur'd quite; as once with Dante it was  
who saw the grace of a fair Florentine damsel  
as WISDOM UNCREATE: for it happen'd to him  
in thatt awakening miracle of Love at first sight,  
which is to many a man his only miracle,  
his one divine Vision, his one remember'd dream—  
it happ'd to Dante, I say, as with no other man  
in the height of his vision and for his faith therein:  
the starry plenitude of his radiant soul,  
searching for tenement in the bounties of life, 230  
encounter'd an aspect of spiritual beauty  
at the still hour of dawn which is holier than day:  
as when a rose-bud first untrammeleth the shells

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of her swathing petals and looseneth their embrace,  
so the sunlight may enter to flush the casket  
of her virgin promise, fairer than her full bloom  
shall ever be, ere its glories lie squander'd in death:—  
'Twas of thatt silent meeting his high vision came  
rapturous as any vision ever to poet giv'n;  
since in thatt Sacrament he rebaptized his soul 240  
and lived thereafter in Love, by the merit of Faith  
toiling to endow the world: and on those feather'd wings  
his mighty poem mounted panting, and lieth now  
with all its earthly tangle by the throne of God.

So to Lucretius also seeking Order in Chance  
some frenzy of Beauty came, neath which constraint he left  
his atoms in the lurch and fell to worshipping  
Aphroditè, the naked Goddess of man's breed;  
and waving the oriflamme of her divinity  
above the march of his slow-trooping argument, 250  
he attributeth to her the creation and being  
of all Beauty soe'er: NEC SINE TE QUICQUAM  
DIAS IN LUMINIS ORAS EXORITUR,

NEQUE FIT LAETUM NEQUE AMABILE QUICQUAM.  
So well did he in his rapture: such is Beauty's power<sup>4</sup>  
physical or spiritual; and if it be the cause  
of spiritual emotion (as hath been said), 'tis plain  
that Beauty will be engaged in man's love, in so far  
as 'tis a proper and actual attribute of man:  
first, as in animals, of his physical form, 260  
to which, when beauty of soul is added, the addition  
but marketh more specially its human character.

Thus Shakespeare, *in the sessions of sweet silent thought*  
gathering from memory the idealization of love,  
when he launch'd from their dream-sheds those golden sonnets  
that swim like gondolas i' the wake of his drama,  
fashion'd for their ensignry a pregnant axiom,  
and wrote: *From fairest creatures we desire increase*

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*That thereby Beauty's Rose might never die*; wherein  
he asserteth beauty to be of love the one motiv, 270  
and thatt in double meaning of object and cause.

And tho' blind instinct wer full puissant of itself  
for propagation of man, yet the attraction of beauty  
bettereth the species, nor without it coud ther hav been  
effect in spirit; and that the poet guarded this  
showeth in his lyric, where of Sylvia 'tis enquired  
*why all the swains commend her*, and he replyeth thereto  
*Holy fair and wise is she*, thus giving to Soul  
first place, thereafter to Body and last of the trine  
Intelligence; and thatt is their right order in Love. 280

And this high beauty of spirit—in the conscience of it,  
in the love of it, and the appearances of it—  
tho' it hav no quarrel with thatt physical beauty  
whereof 'twas born, when once 'tis waken'd in the mind  
needeth no more support of the old animal lure,  
but absolute in its transmitted power and grace  
maketh a new beauty of its own appearances.

Thus oft the full majesty and happiness of love  
is found in lovers whose corporeal presences  
would seem disloyalty to the gay worshippers 290  
of the goddess of grace, nor fit to approach her shrine:  
yet lightly wil Love rate the ridicule of them  
whose passion, subsisting in the flourish of flesh,  
outlasteth not its brief prime, but must fade and fade  
as thatt fadeth, and when it perisheth perish;  
and who themselves—save in the rout of their revel  
they hav perish'd immature—provide tales of despair,  
disease and madness; melancholy tragedies  
of ignobility unredeem'd, to scare mankind.

But love's true passion is of immortal happiness, 300  
whereof the Greeks, maybe,—whose later poets told  
of a heav'nly Aphrodite—had some dim prescience

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before man ever arrived at that wisdom thru' Christ,  
and now teacheth to his children as their birthright,—a gift  
whose wealth is amplified by spending, and its charm  
rejuvenated by habit, that dulles all else:  
nor needeth it for joy to look off from this earth  
and beyond, nor to sit on the schoolbench with them  
who dispute in argument the existence of God;  
being of eternity it overcometh evil 310  
as any nativ disposition is apt to do,  
but more surely and with its virtue more self-secure  
than the merry or sad heart is, that in laughter or tears  
will keep unchanged its temper, whatsoe'er befall;  
*so priketh hem Nature in hir corages.*  
But think not Aphroditè therefor disesteem'd  
for rout of her worshippers, nor sensuous Beauty  
torn from her royal throne, who is herself mother  
of heav'nly Love (so far as in human aspect  
eternal essence can hav mortal parentage), 320  
our true compass in art as our comfort in faith,  
our daily bread of pleasur;—enough that thus I deem  
of Beauty among Goddes best gifts, and even above  
the pleasur of Virtue accord it honour of men.

The allure of bodily beauty is mutual in mankind  
as is the instinct of breed, which tho' it seem i' the male  
more activ, is i' the female more predominant,  
more deeply engaging life, grave and responsible.  
Thus while in either sex celibat lives are led  
without impoverishment of intellect or will, 330  
this thing is rare in women, whereas in the man  
virginity may seem a virile energy  
in its angelic liberty, prerequisite  
to the perfection of some high personality.

And here we are driv'n to enquire of Reason how it came

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that bodily beauty is deem'd a feminin attribute,  
since not by science nor æsthetick could we arrive  
at such a judgment. But not triflingly to trench  
on prehistoric problems, 'twil be enough to say  
that from the first it may not always hav been so, 340  
and primacy of beauty may hav once lain with the male,  
in days of pagan savagery, afore men left  
their hunting and took tillage of the fields in hand,  
superseding the women and all their moon-magic,  
to invent a reason'd labor of intensiv culture,  
as now 'tis seen;—whether in remotest orient lands  
whose cockcrow is our curfew, where Chinesees swarm  
teasing their narrow plots with hand and hoe, carrying  
their own dung on their heads obsequiously as ants;  
or on our western farms where now machines usurp 350  
such manual labor, and hav with their strange forms dethroned  
the heraldry of the seasons, fair emblems of eld  
that seem'd the inalienable imagery of mankind.

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me  
in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing  
patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,  
as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow  
submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!  
They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now  
squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360  
a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro  
combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,  
blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,  
hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn,  
were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,  
a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,  
and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,  
swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,  
that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370

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clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,  
as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:  
and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,  
whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke  
the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach  
against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft  
toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,  
and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry  
it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380  
that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield  
with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile  
the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints  
feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

Thus hath man's Reason dealt since he took spade in hand,  
either by wit of the insect or of the engineer:  
and they who hav come to think that in remotest times  
Eve delved and Adam span, can show matriarchy of sorts  
had precedent in natur, ostensibly among birds,  
whose males more gaudily feather'd wil disport their charms  
and dance in coquetry to win the admiring hens: 391  
Verily it well may be that sense of beauty came  
to those primitiv bipeds earlier than to man.

But howso in patriarchal times our code upgrew,  
it hath decretals honour'd in the courts of Love:  
'tis the faith of all poets from the Troubadours  
to Shelley's broken amours, and that the fair Muses  
should hav masculin wooers was Apollo's will  
who favour'd his own sex. But had the god inspired  
poetesses many as poets—coud that hav been— 400  
follies had cancel'd out truly in the equation of love,  
and steadier fire of passion would hav warm'd the world.  
Today if any lady in her boudoir rhymeth,  
she is drown'd in man's tradition and disguiseth her tone,

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transposing her high music to the lower clef;  
or deemeth thatt the orthodoxy of the sapphic mode,  
because of the two love songs which pedantry hath saved  
of Sappho's complisht artistry, one by mischance,  
in that muliebrous dump which gave Catullus pause,  
hath this falsification of her true soprano. 410

But 'twas the deeper voice that robed passion in song,  
with the masculin emotion that glorify'd it:  
and man, finding elation in physical beauty  
and in the passion of sex his chief transport of soul,  
ascribed supremacy of beauty to woman's grace,  
and she to'ardly accepted his idolatry.

Yet if the passion had been identic in the twain,  
the woman surely had found her like ideal in man;  
but the motifs of Nature that determin life  
are hidden, and with the sexes they are unlike in love. 420

For tho' true loves are mutual and of equal strength  
and their bodily communion is a sacrament—  
like those irrevocable initiations of yore  
whose occult ritual it was profane to disclose—  
and in its uttermost surrender of secrecies  
hallowing brute instinct, symbolizeth approach  
to satisfaction of unattainable desire;  
yet in fullest devotion and frankest abandon  
of eager and mutual mating, whether or no she ken,  
the woman's choice hath been by a deeper purpose led, 430  
whereof the mastering revelation awaiteth her  
in the reality of her Motherhood; wherefor,  
that her son may be noble, she wil seek his sire  
where her ideal, howe'er vaguely imagin'd, lieth  
outside her sphere, beyond her—and so thinketh she less  
of thatt for which her mate praiseth and seeketh her,  
and longing evermore for what she most lacketh,  
in her thought of wisdom looketh for higher things,  
and for immortal Roses desireth increase.



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How Natur (as Plato saith) teacheth man by beauty, 440  
and by the lure of sense leadeth him ever upward  
to heav'nly things, and how the mere sensible forms  
which first arrest him take-on ever more and more  
spiritual aspect,—yet discard not nor disown  
their sensuous beauty, since thatt is eternal and sure,  
the essence thereof being the reverent joy of life—  
this everywhere is seen and most overtly in Breed  
(too many in truth ther be who find it never elsewhere);  
yet man is slow to see that love's call to woman  
is graver and more solemn than it can be to him, 450  
by reason of her higher function and duty therein,  
and that all past attainment which his spirit hath won  
came to him thru' motherhood of the nursling boy;—  
yea, ev'n the dignity of his masculin intellect,  
that outreacheth her range, was first of her making  
and never coud hav fruited but for the devout  
fostering environment of her lovingkindness:  
nor can man's futur attainment forgo thatt shelter,  
wherewith her precocious girlhood accompanieth 460  
the evergrowing incumbency of his pupillage,  
as it grew in the brutes: . . and here 'tis seen again  
how 'tis a backsliding and treason against nature  
when women wil unsex their own ideal of Love,  
and ignorantly aiming to be in all things as men,  
would make love as men make it—tho' Sappho did thatt,  
who rare among women for manly mastery of art,  
a Nonsuch of her kind, exceeded by default,  
nondescript, and for lack of the true feminin  
borrow'd effeminacy of men, the incontinents,  
who, ranking with gluttons in Aristotle's book, 470  
made a lascivious pleasure of their Lesbian loves;  
till in the event the euphony of her isle's fair name  
whisper'd an unspoken and else unspeakable shame.

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Nor can the ethic that here intrudeth be deny'd,  
since if men speak of morals 'tis of sex they think;  
forwhy the passion of it both transporteth their souls  
and troubleth daily life with problems of conduct.

Now to the most who are like to read my English poem  
christian marriage will seem a stablsh'd ordinance  
as universal, wholesome and needful to man 480  
as WHEAT is, which, ubiquitous, and sib to a weed  
that yet will hamper its cultur, overruleth all else,  
weigheth our gold by single grains, and harvested  
measureth in sacks the peace and welfare of the world,  
our BREAD OF LIFE, and symbol of the food of the soul.

But tho' monogamy had been by wise lawgivers  
coded with rights and duties and property, and thus  
by Jewish use or Roman held place in the Church,  
the instinct of sex was ever anathema to the Essenes  
whose thought handsel'd the faith; 'twas to thatt sect the  
accurst 490

contamination of all spiritual purity:  
and only after tough battle against two mighty outbursts  
of Pagan Poetry coud marriage come in the end  
to its own, from being a tolerated discordancy  
to be an accepted harmony, and hallow'd as such  
within the Church, a sacrament. Of those two wars  
the story is long, and now 'tis here briefly to tell.

The first War of the Essenes was with the poetry  
of SELFHOOD, those sagas and epic rhapsodies  
which had burst forth to flood all Europe in the time 500  
of the northern invasions, when the hideous Huns,  
extending the right wing of their havoc, swept down  
on the old land of the Goths. Soon as their arrows prick'd  
our Teuton forefathers, a clash of arms and yell  
of battle arose, that in the unsearchable storage  
of earth's high firmament vibrateth to this day.

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The warriors, who in vain defence of home escaped  
the first mauling and massacre, wer driven forth  
and, pressing Westwârd desperatly, became in turn  
themselves ruthless invaders, live firebrands that spredd 510  
the blast of their contagion to Allemand and Frank,  
Burgundian, Vandal and Lombard, from Angle and Dane  
to furthest Kelt; and with the sword follow'd the song,  
an inextinguishable pæan of battle and blood.

A sudden eruption of nature, as when earth quaketh  
and faltering along the edges of its wrinkling shell  
the mountains roar and crack, and vent their ruddy bowels  
in spume of molten lava; as oft hath been where now  
some gracious valley embosom'd in soft azurous hills  
smileth, an Eden as fair as Goddes love was feign'd 520  
to have planted for man's use—thatt lost garden regain'd,  
lost once thru' pride and now by long stooping regain'd,—  
a pictur and outward symbol of the comfort of them  
whose spirits dwell in the Eden that the Muse hath made  
her garden of soul in *the golden lapses of Time*;  
and if, tracing to its source some Heliconian rill,  
its mossgrown cave is found in the black splinter'd rock,  
where thatt once cool'd and stay'd, a volcanic moraine  
to bank his blossom'd Paradise and feed his vines,  
ther-after to the poet all his joy wil seem 530  
*a strange mysterious dream*, a thread of beauty eterne  
enwoven in mortal change, and he himself a flower  
fertilized awhile on the quench'd torrent of Hell.

Now when Rome's mitred prelates ambled o'er the Alps  
to hold the Gallic provinces, whose overlords  
their missionaries had won to the confession of Christ,  
the pagan folk submissiv to constraint wer driv'n  
in flocks to th' font, but got little washing therein.

Whatever of kindness Tacitus once had found  
sequester'd in the rude homesteads of Germany 540

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was burnt up in thatt fiery ordeal, which taught them  
the joy of frenzy and prowess, and the songs whereby  
they glorify'd the memory of successful lust,  
and stirr'd anew the fierce delight of battle and blood.

A wilder strain maybe than the lost Bedouin songs,  
that seal'd the weird which the Angel in Araby foretold  
to the outcast bondwoman in the famishing desert,  
and she to her son,—that his horoscope was to range  
like the wild ass untameable, and his hand should be  
'gainst ev'ry man, and ev'ry man's hand against him. 550

Wherfor hitting for remedy on Plato's old plan,  
when he proscribed Homer from his Utopian schools—  
saying that morals wer unteachable to men  
who imputed mortal passions to the immortal gods—,  
the priests denounced the bards, and would hav stopp'd their  
mouths;

but finding that forbiddance met with no regard  
they turn'd to assure their flock by amity, and to comb  
the fleece they might not shear: upon which way they wrought  
some mitigation, and growing reconciled to the art,  
and grudging to the heathen what might serve the Church, 560  
they took thought to divert it, and engaged the bards  
to make like stirring balladry of the Bible tales:  
wherein, joining themselves with good heart to the work,  
their first grains of allowance multiply'd to pounds;  
while with their clerkly skill they sat fast to transcribe  
the old pagan tales, redacted to the amended form  
in which we know them, with what other numberless  
wonder-lives of the Saints they wrote, symbolic masques  
of Christian orthodoxy, and later mystery-plays.

So all these diverse stuffs thru' the dark centuries 570  
lay quietly a-soak together in the dye-vats, wherein  
our British Arthur was clandestinely christen'd  
and crown'd, and all his knights cleansed and respirited,  
re clothed as might be: for the dispossess'd devils

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had kindly accepted their rebate, content to find  
their old home swept and garnish'd; and tho' verily  
in their domestication, as 'tis with brutes, they had lost  
keenness of sense and true compact of character,  
they flourish to this day the darlings of our poets,  
who drape their model Arthur to their taste, whereas 580  
time was when good St. Andrew strode forth in plate-mail.

While thus the Catechists made compromising peace  
with the poetry of SELFHOOD, ere the fight was won  
in rescue of womanhood from the ravish of war,  
a new era had dawn'd and a new strain of song,  
the young poetry of BREED; and the conflict therewith  
is in my story styled the second Essene War.

'Twas no Huns now that stirr'd the Frankish heart to sing,  
nay rather Athena's call, and the gracious emblems  
of Hellenic humanity, that long had drown'd 590  
where they had sunk o'erwhelm'd in the wreckage of Rome;  
undersuck'd in the wallow, when Cæsar's great ship  
founder'd with all its toys decadent in the deep,  
now freshly of their buoyancy up-struggling here and there  
to ride in sparkling dance on the desolat sea:  
Or what grave lore had refuged with the Ishmaelite  
was stealing back from exile to its western home,  
its mansion of birthright, and had now already inspired  
passionat Abelard, who with his ethnic books  
was heralding in Paris that full Renaissance 600  
which should illumin Europe, and plant her cities  
with Universities of learning, sanctuaries  
of spirit, our schools of thought and science to this day.

Full Springtime was not yet surely, nor soon to be:  
'twas as mayhap *à ce jour de Saint Valentin*  
*que chacun doit choisir son per*, or a later day  
of February, when in the shelter'd woodland  
the Sun with broadening smile thinketh to intercalate

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a glad red-letter'd feast in Winter's almanac,  
which the thrush boldly announceth—tho' the migrant birds  
hav yet made no return upon the balmy sprays, 611  
but the small homekeepers muster what choir they can:  
Not otherwise was thatt first impetuous raid that storm'd  
the rear of the dark ages prematurely; and yet  
the singers wer so many that man marveleth stil  
whence they came, or by what spontaneous impulse sang.

As well might be with one who wendeth lone his way  
beside the watchful dykes of the flat Frisian shore,  
what hour the wading tribes, that make their home and breed  
numberless on the marshy polders, creep unseen 620  
widely dispersed at feed, and silent neath the sun  
the low unfeatured landscape seemeth void of life—  
when without warning suddenly all the legion'd fowl  
rise from their beauties' ambush in the reedy beds,

and on spredd wings with clamorous ecstasy  
carillioning in the air manœuvre, and where they wheel  
transport the broken sunlight, shoaling in the sky—  
with like sudden animation the fair fields of France  
gave birth to myriad poets and singers unknown,  
who in a main flight gathering their playful flock 630  
settled in Languedoc, on either side the Rhone  
within the court and county of Raymond of Toulouse.

Nor wer these Troubadours hucksters of song who tuned  
their pipes for fee: some far glimpse of the heav'nly Muse  
had reach'd and drawn the soul by the irresistible  
magnet of love: as when in the blockish marble  
the sculptor's thought of beauty loometh into shape  
neath his rude hammerstrokes, ere the true form is seen;  
so had the monks' rough-hewing of the old pagan tales  
discover'd virtue:—an Ideal of womanhood 640  
had striven into outline; which, tho' passion heeded not  
yet art had grasp'd, divining fresh motiv for skill,  
whereby knights, churchmen, monks, courtiers and scholars all

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childishly wer enthrall'd: ev'n kings found honor in rhyme  
whose royalty is today its only honor, and to us  
would seem frivolity, knew we not that we watch  
beside the rocking-cradle of babes, whose prattling tongues  
should oust monarchic Latin from his iron throne—  
which not the slaughter of this one innocent could save:  
Skysoarers should be rear'd of such young flutterers; 650  
for whom two freaks of fortune happily conspired,  
a fine phantasy of spirit with light fabric of art;  
so the faint dream of chivalry, as it took-on form,  
tripp'd delicatly with the delicat music  
of the tentativ language, whose mincing metres  
imposed good manners on the articulation of speech.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,  
Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—  
a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;  
tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660  
Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,  
Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon  
and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names  
of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes  
Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World  
far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home  
westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms  
of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,  
damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670  
whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be  
i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held  
place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line  
wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montélimar, Narbonne,  
Béziers, Castelnaudary, Béarn and Carcassonne,  
and truly I could hav shared their fancy could I hav liv'd  
among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,  
and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will

### *Book III. Breed*

which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn  
that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. In Provence 680  
Jew quarrel'd not with Gentile; ther was peace and love  
'twixt Saracen and Christian, Catalan and Frank;  
and (wonder beyond wonder) here was harbour'd safe,  
flourishing and multiplying, thatt sect of all sects  
abominable, persecuted and defamed,  
who with their Eastern chaffering and insidious talk  
had ferreted thru' Europe to find peace on earth  
with Raymond of Toulouse,—those ancient Manichees.

Restless and impatient man's mind is ever in quest  
of some system or mappemonnd or safeguard of soul, 690  
and coming not at Truth—ev'n as a dry-athirst horse  
that drinketh eagerly of the first gilded puddle,—  
he espouseth delusion and sweareth fealty thereto:  
and since common conditions breed common opinion,  
nations lie fascinated in their swaddling clothes  
cramp't, and atrophied with their infantile suctions.  
So in the inmost sanctum of the Hindu mind  
a milch-cow is enshrined: but those dour Manichees  
wer trifling with no symbols; their wild faith had grown  
deep-rooted on the prime obsession of savagery, 700  
thatt first terrifying nightmare of dawning conscience  
which, seeing in natur a power maleficent to man,  
estopp'd his growth in love: for these zealots ascribed  
this visible world to the work of a devil,  
from all time Goddes foe and enemy to all good:  
In hate of which hellpower so worthy of man's defiance  
they had lost the old fear, and finding internecine war  
declared twixt flesh and spirit in the authentic script  
of Paul of Tarsus, him they took for master, and styled  
themselves Paulicians the depositaries of Christ. 710

Their creed—better than other exonerating God  
from blame of evil—and their austere asceticism



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shamed the half-hearted clerics, whose licence in sin  
confirm'd the uncompromising logic, which inferr'd  
a visible earthly Church to be Satan's device,  
the Pope his minister,—him, the third Innocent,  
who held his wide ambition for the will of God,  
his fulminating censure for the voice of Christ;  
and, troubled now that he could neither cleanse nor cure,  
persuade not nor command, fell; and betray'd by zeal 720  
(as angry Peter once to serve Christ with the sword),  
preach'd a Crusade within the fold,—thatt bloody wrath  
label'd in history The Albigenian war,  
a sinking millstone heavy as ever pontiff tied  
round the neck of the Church. For the champions of Christ  
outdid the heathen Huns in cruelty, and in the end  
was Raymond's county ravaged to ruin and his folk  
massacred all or burnt alive, man woman and child,  
and their language wiped out, so that a man today  
reading Provençal song studieth in a dead tongue. 730

Yet many Troubadours escaping from slaughter  
fled to the Italian cities where the New Learning  
gave kind asylum to their secret flame; and ere  
within the Church's precincts they had raised a song,  
Chivalry had won acceptance in the ideal of sex  
and, blending with the worship of the Mother of God,  
assured the consecration of MARRIAGE, still unknown  
save to the christian folk of Europe whence it sprang.

Thus, as it came to pass, the second Essene War  
brought the New Life in which full soon Dante was born. 740

The motive of Selfhood is common to all Being,  
the universal Mind informing existence,  
and had ther been no beauty in life nor any joy  
beyond thatt ground-pleasure, which all creatures may feel  
in the inconscient functionings of their organisms

### *Book III. Breed*

and satisfaction of instinct—had thatt been, ev'n so  
nothing had lack'd to inspire the selfassertion of man:  
But since ther is beauty in nature, mankind's love of life  
apart from love of beauty is a tale of no count;  
and tho' he linger'd long in his forest of fear, 750  
or e'er his apprehensiv wonder at unknown power  
threw off the first night-terrors of his infant mind,  
the vision of beauty awaited him, and step by step  
led him in joy of spirit to full fruition.

Now as with Selfhood so was it again with Breed;  
for the fashioning of sex was attended thru'out  
by necessary attractions—as 'tis seen in plant  
or animal, and these as they suffice in brutes  
suffice in man so far as he also is animal;  
but being specifically endow'd he must in course 760  
hav with the growth of reason outgrown the animal wont;  
and in perfection of kind he surely had lost his lure,  
had he not learn'd in beauty to transfigure love.

Many shy at such doctrin: Science, they wil say,  
knoweth nought of this beauty. But what kenneth she  
of colour or sound? Nothing: tho' science measure true  
every wave-length of ether or air that reacheth sense,  
there the hunt checketh, and her keen hounds are at fault;  
for when the waves hav pass'd the gates of ear and eye  
all scent is lost: suddenly escaped the visibles 770  
are changed to invisible; the fine-measured motions  
to immeasurable emotion; the cypher'd fractions  
to a living joy that man feeleth to thrive his soul.  
How should science find beauty? Leibnitz rightly is held  
the most irrefutable of all philosophers,  
because he boldly excised the intrinse knot from the rope  
and, showing both ends free, proclaim'd no knot had been;  
imagining two independent worlds that move  
in pre-establish'd harmony twixt matter and mind;

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—a pleasant freak of man's godlike intelligence, 780  
vex'd by so vain a need; and thinking, with a thought  
so inconceivable, to save appearances.

That ther is beauty in natur and that man loveth it  
are one thing and the same; neither can be derived  
apart as cause of the other: and here it is to tell  
how female beauty came to be the common lure  
in human marriage.—First in animal mating  
the physical attractions, as they evolved with sense,  
took-on beautiful forms, til beauty (as in bird-song)  
was recognized consciently and exploited by art, 790  
and after in man became that ladder of joy whereon  
slowly climbing at heaven he shall find peace with God,  
and beauty be wholly spiritualised in him,  
as in its primal essence it must be conceived.

This ken we truly, that as wonder to intellect,  
so for the soul desire of beauty is mover and spring;  
whence, in whatever his spirit is most moved, a man  
wil most be engaged with beauty; and thus in his "first love"  
physical beauty and spiritual are both present  
mingled inseparably in his lure: then is he seen 800  
in the ecstasy of earthly passion and heav'nly vision  
to fall to idolatry of some specious appearance  
as if 'twere very incarnation of his heart's desire,  
whether eternal and spiritual, as with Dante it was,  
or mere sensuous perfection, or as most commonly  
a fusion of both—when if distractedly he hav thought  
to mate mortally with an eternal essence  
all the delinquencies of his high passion ensue.

Verily if Hope wer not itself a happiness  
sorrow would far outweigh our mortal joy, but Hope 810  
incarnat in the blood kindleth its hue no less  
with every breath, to flood all the sluices of life  
long as the heart can beat. And yet in love-mating

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hope's ideal is so rich and fulfilment so rare,  
that common minds in trudge with common experience  
may think to amend their lot by renouncing life-vows,  
as a vain bondage perversiv of happiness.

And coud man separate brutal from spiritual,  
and in things of the flesh liv as animals do  
stealing their food and seizing the delight of the hour, 820  
thatt were reasonable enough and might be wise in man;  
but such divorcement being in the provision of things  
shut out, there is no way left nor choice for him, unless  
he would make shipwreck, and of mere brutality  
fall to pieces—ther is no hope for him but to attune  
nature's diversity to a human harmony,  
and with faith in his hope and full courage of soul  
realizing his will at one with all nature,  
devise a spiritual ethick for conduct in life.

Refusal of christian marriage is, as 'twere in art, 830  
to impugn the credit of the most beautiful things  
because ther are so few of them, and hold it folly  
to aim at excellence where so few can succeed;  
and where any success pincheth the happiness  
of the far greater number, who left to themselves  
might feel fuller content admiring common things  
or ugly, and be happier in whatever likings  
they can indulge. Altho' they know it not, this is  
the humanitarianism of democracy;  
and since ther is in the mass little good to look for 840  
but what instruction, authority and example impose,  
Ethick and Politick alike hav trouble in store.

Now mere impulse of sex,—from animal mating  
to the vision of Dante—tho' strong in all degrees,  
is not the bond of marriage. Nay, if breeding ceased,—  
all motiv to it, liking for it and thought of it,—

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women and men would mate; and, whatever might lack,  
married life might be found a more congenial state,  
and *marriage of true minds* hav less *impediment*.

Happiness, which all seek, is not composable 850  
of any summation of particular pleasures;  
the happiness in marriage dependeth for-sure  
not on the animal functions, but on qualities  
of spirit and mind that are correlated therewith.

So 'twas not of false ethick or weak prudery  
when thatt old Hebrew poet, in his mighty myth  
of man's creation, imagin'd Eve's predestiny  
to be helpmate and comfort to God's perfect man;  
nor in thatt strange fashioning of her from Adam's rib  
fudged he his symbol; perfect man being in thatt theft 860  
imperfected by loss of an original part  
now personate in Eve, of whom he should require  
what was in first design confused in his nature,  
and from thatt fleshly cleavage find true tally of flesh.

This myth was law to th' Jew, and 'twas men of their clan  
(those same Essenes whose creed prevail'd so long),  
who, when Christ's mournful company wer by his death  
reft of their earthly dreams, took courage and reset  
their disillusion'd hope bolder—to look no more  
for Rome and Cæsar's overthrow, but rather expect 870  
Jahveh's wrathful dissolution of all creation;  
that Christ would rēappear in pitiless Godhead  
full suddenly and full soon, to judge the world of sin,  
and with his angels gather-up his living elect  
to his new Jerusalem, those few Saints undefiled,  
who had *wash'd their robes to whiteness in the blood o' the*  
*Lamb*.

Now those stern Puritans who liv'd but in thatt faith,  
in whom motiv and lure of breed wer wholly extinct,  
execrating the body as other men flee death,  
had no fear of contamination nor thought of ill 880

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in taking women in marriage, each man one to himself,  
as comrades indispensable, of spiritual aid.

Truly myths so ancient and examples of life,  
fish'd-up out of the old jumble-box of history,  
can find but little credit with this generation  
who, like to children absorb'd in the scientific toys  
of their high-kilted gossips, care not to ransack  
the nursery cupboard for their grand-dam's old playthings;  
tho' family relics are they, once loved, and may show  
how that in man's eternal quest of happiness, 890  
contempt of fleshly pleasur is as near to his spirit  
as is the love of it to his animal nature.

Vestiges of his stony asceticism imbue  
all time, thick as the strewage of his flinty tools,  
disseminat wheresoe'er he hath dwelt; nor need we now,  
from where they sleep bedded on archæologic shelves,  
fetch down upon the lecture-table our specimens  
to teach what manners went to the making of man;  
having such living witness of harmonized life  
in the aristocracy of our English motherhood, 900  
whence the nobility of our sons came, and therewith  
precedence of their courtesy title in the world;  
a tradition of good-faith, humanity and courage,  
that year by year flowereth on the grafted stock  
of Saxon temperament; the which slow or dead  
to beauty, is but a dullard in spiritual sense.

And so the character of our common folk, up-built  
in the commanding presence of feminin grace,  
won therefrom (as I hold) its vulgar excellence;  
for finding their own conduct uncomformable 910  
to beauty of so high grade, they guarded it apart  
submissiv in its own status, a kindly thing  
with nativ honesty and good commonsense convinced;  
and, easing embarrassment with the humour of life,  
paid due respect and honour where they felt 'twas due,

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so they might goodtemper'dly and in laughable wise  
hobnob with ugliness, and jest at frightfulness,  
and keep the farce up mirthfully in the face of death.  
If any see not this fractur in our midst, because  
the pieces are in place, 'tis pictured for him true 920  
in Shakespeare's drama, where ideal women walk  
in worship, and the baser sort find sympathy,  
and both are bravely stirr'd together as water and oil.

But if 'tis ask'd to name what special function it was  
that fell sequester'd out of Adam in his lost rib,  
and which, when launch'd by Reason on his sea of troubles,  
should be his paregoric and comforting cure,—  
'twas no unique, ultimatly separable thing,  
as is a chemic element; for rather our moods,  
influences and spiritual affections are like 930  
those many organic substances which, tho' to sense  
wholly dissimilar and incomparable in kind,  
are yet all combinations of the same simples,  
and even in like proportions differently disposed;  
so that whether it be starch, oil, sugar, or alcohol  
'tis ever our old customers, carbon and hydrogen,  
pirouetting with oxygen in their morris antics;  
the chemist booketh all of them as C H O,  
and his art is as mine, when I but figurate  
the twin persistent semitones of my Grand Chant. 940

And 'twere but bookish, surely, in the fabric of mind  
to assume the disposition of vital elements  
under a few common names, alike in both sexes;  
'tis easier thought that ther is no human faculty  
that hath not been in long elaboration of sex  
adjusted finely, and often to such richer ends  
that, tho' by correlation characters of sex,  
they are not held in subservience to the impulse of Breed,—  
as some deem, and impute precocious puberty

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to new-born babes, and all their after trouble in life      950  
to shamefast thwarting of inveterat lust.

Now Woman took her jointure from the potency  
of spirit stored in flesh, the which, affined to her sex,  
became a property of intuition and grew in her,  
thru' mutual adaptation with the environments  
that wer its own effects, to a female character  
in worth alike and weakness distinct from the male:  
for while man's Reason drew him whither science led  
to walk with downcast eyes fix'd on the ground, and low  
incline his ear to catch the sermon-whisper of stones—      960  
whence now whole nations, by their treasure-trove enrich'd,  
crawl greedily on their knees nosing the soil like swine,  
and any, if they can twist their stiffen'd necks about,  
see the stars but as stones,—while men thus search'd the earth,  
stooping to pick up wisdom, women stood erect  
in honest human posture, from light's fount to drink  
celestial influences; and this was seen in them  
that worship'd Christ nor look'd, as then the apostles did,  
for some earthly prosperity or prospect, nor ask'd  
what chief seats might be theirs reserved in the Kingdom;      970  
his heav'nly call drew him, and the Mary who sat  
at Christ's feet in devotion, heard from him her choice  
pronounced the one thing needful; and as 'twas for her,  
so is it nowaday for us to our happiness.

For 'tis by such faith only a man can save his soul;  
since as his unique spirit cometh more and more  
out of slumber into vision, he loseth heart the more  
at the inhumanity of nature's omnipotence.  
Thatt first savage suspicion is now the last despair  
of earnest thinkers, who for love of truth refuse      980  
to blink dishonestly the tribulation of man,  
but deem it final truth, and see no cure thereof,  
nor solace save what brave distraction of thought may bring



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in further keen pursuit of knowledge, on the old path  
that hath hereby led them where the everlasting worm  
eateth their hearts . . . and yet man's Reason (as is confess'd)  
since 'tis of nature's fabric must share in her fault;  
and man's spiritual sense, which inspireth his grief,  
is equally of her giving: whence his complaint sheweth  
the strange perversity of creation's self-reproach; 990  
tho' nature the while is by beauty awakening  
her heav'nly response to her heavenliest desire,  
and in spiritual joy sanctioneth to the full  
the claim of faith. To such despairers Christ out-spake  
in his rich poetry *'Tis better with one eye  
blinded to enter into the life of Goddes Realm  
than with both eyes to grieve in Hell.* Be thatt not Truth,  
then ther is something found for man better than Truth;  
which thought wer the supreme vanity of vanities,  
at once a superhuman ambition and a poor pride, 1000  
truly *the last infirmity of his noble mind.*

From blind animal passion to the vision of Spirit  
all actual gradations come of natur, and each  
severally in time and place is answerable in man.  
As with the embryo which in normal growth passeth  
thru' evolutionary stages, at each stage  
consisting with itself agreeably, so Mind  
may be by observation in young changes waylaid,  
agreeable all, tho' no more congruous with themselves  
than what a baby thinketh of its naked feet, 1010  
when first it is aware of them, is like the thought  
of piteous sympathy with which when an old man  
he wil come to regard them. So likewise of BREED,  
youth and age hold their irreconcilable extremes,  
from him who deemeth sex to be the curse of man  
to him who findeth in it the only pleasur of life:

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then the four temperaments of blood possess of kind  
their different sensibilities, and every bias  
of education coloureth; while in abstract thought  
some would submit its energy to rule of state, 1020  
to ethic duty some, others to personal health,  
to social propriety or the grace of good manners;  
climate can subjugate and religion constrain;  
national taste prescribe practice and fix ideals;  
yet howso no two men wil be found wholly alike,  
nor any one man always consonant in himself;  
the saint wil hav his days of humiliation and trial,  
the clown his rare moments of revelation and peace,  
while commonsense wil waver in its faith with fortune.

Now as a physical object apparent to sense 1030  
must in all its perspectivs be studied, tho' none  
be true wholly in itself, and reality is found  
by elimination of error, so 'twil be with Love,  
which, if it had no various aspects of feeling  
nor delusiv perspectivs to spiritual sight,  
neither coud it hav any essential property  
in the Wisdom of God: thus men, who mostly liv  
in the light of one aspect and convinced thereby,  
wil deem of love differently, and in as many ways  
as ther be planes of spirit and faculties of mind: 1040  
and the philosopher expecteth little audience  
of men school'd to the habit of their own liking,  
and wer he heaven-inspired he should not therefor look  
to win the general ear; yet, one proviso allow'd,  
he may command agreement; so (saith he) if ther be  
any one scheme of Reason in the evolution of Mind  
preferable and probable—and without so much faith  
he would sit dumb—then thatt ideal wil be found  
in few, not in many, but potential in them,  
and in the best imperfect, a desire of all, 1050  
an everlasting hope not everlastingly

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to be rebuff'd and baffled, rather præordain'd  
by arch-creativ Wisdom, as man groweth to find  
his Will in Goddes pleasur, his pleasur in Goddes Will;  
drawn to thatt happiness by the irresistible  
predominant attraction, which worketh secure  
in mankind's Love of Beauty and in the Beauty of Truth.

Art is the true and happy science of the soul,  
exploring nature for spiritual influences,  
as doth physical science for comforting powers, 1060  
advancing so to a sure knowledge with like progress:  
but lovers who thereto look for expression of truth  
hav great need to remember that no plastic Art,  
tho' it create ideals noble as are the forms  
that Pheidias wrought, can ever elude or wholly escape  
its earthly medium; nor in its adumbrations  
reach thatt detach'd suprasensuous vision, whereto  
Poetry and Music soar, nor dive down in the mine  
where cold philosophy diggeth her fiery jewels—  
or only by rare magic may it sometimes escape. 1070

And this was the intuition of our landscape-painters,  
whose venture seem'd humbled in renouncing the prize  
of the classic contest, when like truants from school  
they made off to the fields with their satchels, and came  
on nature's beauteous by-paths into a purer air:  
For the Art of painting, by triumph of colouring  
enticed to Realism, had confounded thereby  
its own higher intention, and in portrayal of spirit  
made way for Symbolism which, tho' it stand aloof,  
is outfaced in the presence of direct feeling: 1080  
Sithence in presentation of feminin beauty  
the highest Art lost mastery of its old ideal;  
as in the great pictur of the two Women at a Well,  
where Titian's young genius, devising a new thing,

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employ'd the plastic power to exhibit at once  
two diverse essences in their value and contrast;  
for while by the æsthetic idealisation of form  
his earthly love approacheth to celestial grace,  
his draped Uranian figure is by symbols veil'd,  
and in pictorial Beauty suffereth defeat: 1090

Yea, despite all her impregnable confidence  
in the truth of her wisdom, as there she sitteth  
beside the fountain, dazzlingly apparel'd, enthroned,  
with thoughtful face impassiv, averting her head  
as 'twere for fuller attention so to incline an ear  
to the impartial hearing of the importunat plea  
of the other, who over-against her on the cornice-plinth  
posturing her wonted nakedness in sensuous ease,  
leaneth her body to'ards her, and with imploring grace  
urgeth the vain deprecation of her mortal prayer. 1100

Giorgione, his master, already had gone to death  
plague-stricken at prime, when Titian painted thatt picture,  
donning his rival's mantle, and strode to higher fame—  
yet not by this canvas; he who had it, hid it;  
nor won it public favour when it came to light,  
untill some mystic named it in the Italian tongue  
L'AMOR SACRO E PROFANO, and so rightly divined;  
for tho' ther is no record save the work of the brush  
to tell the intention, yet what the mind wrought is there;  
and who looketh thereon may see in the two left arms 1110  
the symbolism apportioning the main design;  
for while the naked figure with extended arm  
and outspreadd palm vauntingly balanceth aloft  
a little lamp, whose flame lost in the bright daylight  
wasteth in the air, thatt other hath the arm bent down  
and oppositely nerved, and clencheth with gloved hand  
closely the cover'd vessel of her secret fire.

Thus Titian hath pictured the main sense of my text,

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and this truth: that as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,  
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness 1120  
which Art would outlaw; whence cometh thatt tinsel honour  
and mimicry of beauty which is the attire of vice.

Allegory is a cloudland inviting fancy  
to lend significance to chancey shapes; and here  
I deem not that the child, who playeth between the Loves  
at Titian's well, was pictured by him with purpose  
to show the first contact of love with boyhood's mind;  
and yet never was symbol more deftly devised:  
Mark how the child looking down on the water see'th  
only a reflection of the realities—as 'twas 1130  
with the mortals in Plato's cave—nor more of them  
than Moses saw of God; he can see but their backs,  
save for a shifty glimpse of the pleading profil  
of earthly Love (which also is subtle truth); and most  
how in his play his plunged hand stirreth to and fro  
both images together in a confused dazzle  
of the dancing ripples as he gazeth intent.

## BOOK IV

### ETHICK

BEAUTY, the eternal Spouse of the Wisdom of God  
and Angel of his Presence thru' all creation,  
fashioning her new love-realm in the mind of man,  
attempteth every mortal child with influences  
of her divine supremacy . . . ev'n as in a plant  
when the sap mounteth secretly and its wintry stalk  
breaketh out in the prolific miracle of Spring,  
or as the red blood floodeth into a beating heart  
to build the animal body comely and strong; so she  
in her transcendant rivalry would flush his spirit 10  
with pleasurable ichor of heaven: and where she hath found  
responsiv faculty in some richly favour'd soul—

*L'anima vaga delle cose belle*, as saith  
the Florentine,—she wil inaugurate her feast  
of dedication, and even in thatt earliest onset,  
when yet infant Desire hath neither goal nor clue  
to fix the dream, ev'n then, altho' it graspeth nought  
and passeth in its airy vision away, and dieth  
out of remembrance, 'tis in its earnest of life  
and dawn of bliss purer and hath less of earthly tinge 20  
than any other after-attainment of the understanding:  
for all man's knowledge kenneth also of toil and flaw  
and even his noblest works, tho' they illumine the dark  
with individual consummation, are cast upon  
by the irrelevant black shadows of time and fate.

Hence is the fascination of amateurs in art,  
who renouncing accomplishment attain the prize  
of their humbler devotion,—as Augustin saith,  
that fools may come at holiness where wise men miss,  
*Facit enim hoc quaedam etiam stoliditas*,— 30

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arriving by short-coming, like to homely birds  
of passage, nesting on the roofs of the workshops.  
And tho' of secret knowledge man's art is compáct,  
yet not the loving study of any master-work,  
nor longest familiarity can ever efface  
its birthday of surprisal; and great music to me  
is glorify'd by memory of one timeless hour  
when all thought fled scared from me in my bewilderment.

See then the boy in first encounter with beauty,  
his nativ wonder awaken'd by the motion of love; 40  
as when live air, breathing upon a smother'd fire,  
shooteth the smouldering core with tiny flames—so he  
kindleth at heart with eternal expectancies,  
and the dream within him looketh out at his eyes.

'Twas thru' worship of Christ that this thing came to men,  
whereat, when art achieved portrayal of tenderness,  
the christian painters throng'd their heav'n with cherubims,  
little amorini, who with rebel innocence  
dispossess'd the tall angels; and Mary's young babe  
cast-off his swaddling bands, and stood-up on her lap 50  
in grace of naked childhood for the image of God.

But as 'tis with the Race, for which our hope draweth  
the only assurance of its high nobility  
from rare examples, holy men and wise, revered  
ev'n by the common folk, that none the less pursue  
their common folly interminably, and more and more  
pamper despair that is the giant sorrow of earth—  
so in the child this glimpse or touch of immanence,  
being a superlativ brief moment of glory,  
is too little to leaven the inveterate lump of life; 60  
and the instincts whose transform'd vitality should lust  
after spiritual things, return to their vomit  
and wallow in the mire of their animal ruts.

Nature hath something truly of her promise in all:  
yet, in the infinit disposition of random seeds,

## Book IV. *Ethick*

her full potency is rare; as in the end of his book  
that maketh the old school-benches yet to sprout in green,  
Aristotle confesseth: where the teacher saith  
virtue cannot be taught to a mind not well disposed  
by natur, and he that hath thatt rarest excellence, 70  
*διὰ τινος θείας αἰτίας* may be above all men  
styled truly fortunat; and with those four Greek words  
hath proudly prick'd to virtue many a sluggard soul.

Forsooth the need of Fortune stayeth not here, alas!  
Ther is no assurance of stability or fair growth,  
unless she stand by faithfully and foster the soul,  
fending from all evil and encompassing with good,  
the while these intimations come to be understood  
and harmonized by Reason in the conduct of life.

Now as Reason matured to the power of manhood, 80  
tutor'd by disciplin of natur, and ordering  
the accumulated scrutiny of physical flux  
in various sciences, so education of spirit,  
in the dignity of its creativ enthusiasms  
and honorable intelligence of Goddes gifts,  
mapp'd out its own science of conduct, aligning  
a pathway of happiness thru' the valley of death:  
and thatt science, call'd *Ethick*, dealing with the skill  
and manage of the charioteer in Plato's myth,  
rangeth up here in place for the parley of this book. 90

Since all *Ethick* implyeth a sense of Duty in man,  
'tis first to enquire whence that responsible OUGHT arose:  
a call so universal and plain-spoken that some  
hav abstracted a special faculty, distinct  
from animal bias and underivable,  
whereby the creature kenneth the creator's Will,  
that, in stillness of sound speaking to gentle souls,  
dowereth all silence with the joy of his presence;



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but to men savage or superstitious a voice  
of horror, maleficent, inescapable, 100  
hounding them with fearful conviction of sin, as when  
Adam in Eden hid from the scour of God's eye.  
Which old tale of displeasur is true to life: because  
the imperativ obligation cannot be over-summ'd,  
being in itself the self-conscience of thatt Essence  
which is no other indeed than the prime ordinance  
that we call Law of Nature,—in its grade the same  
with the determin'd habit of electrons, the same  
with the determining instinct of unreasoning life,  
NECESSITY become conscient in man—whereto 110  
all insubordination is imperfection in kind.

Reality appeareth in forms to man's thought  
as several links interdependent of a chain  
that circling returneth upon itself, as doth  
the coil'd snake that in art figureth eternity.

From Universal Mind the first-born atoms draw  
their function, whose rich chemistry the plants transmute  
to make organic life, whereon animals feed  
to fashion sight and sense and give service to man,  
who sprung from them is conscient in his last degree 120  
of ministry unto God, the Universal Mind,  
whither all effect returneth whence it first began.

The Ring in its repose is Unity and Being:  
Causation and Existence are the motion thereof.  
Thru'out all runneth Duty, and the conscience of it  
s thatt creativ faculty of animal mind  
that, wakening to self-conscience of all Essences,  
closeth the full circle, where the spirit of man  
escaping from the bondage of physical Law  
re-entereth eternity by the vision of God. 130

This absolution of Reason is not for all to see:

## *Book IV. Ethick*

But any man may picture how Duty was born,  
and trace thereafter its passage in the ethick of man.

Ther is a young black ouzel, now building her nest  
under the Rosemary on the wall, suspiciously  
shunning my observation as I sit in the porch,  
intentiv with my pencil as she with her beak:  
Coud we discourse together, and wer I to ask for-why  
she is making such pother with thatt rubbishy straw,  
her answer would be surely: 'I know not, but I MUST.' 140  
Then coud she take persuasion of Reason to desist  
from a purposeless action, in but a few days hence  
when her eggs wer to hatch, she would look for her nest;  
and if another springtide found us here again,  
with memory of her fault, she would know a new word,  
having made conscient passage from the MUST to the OUGHT.

I halt not then nor stumble at how the duteous call  
was gotten in course of nature, rather it lieth to show  
how it was after-shapen in man from physical  
to moral ends, and came no longer only to affirm 150  
but sometimes even to oppose the bidding of instinct,  
positing beside OUGHT the equivalent OUGHT NOTS,  
the stern forbiddances of those tables of stone  
that Moses fetch'd out of the thunder of Sinai.

And since we see how man's judgment of Right and Wrong  
varieth with education—and thatt without effect  
to strengthen or weaken Duty—, we conclude therefrom  
that education shapeneth our moralities.  
And when and whereas Conscience transfigureth the Instincts  
—to affection, as aforesaid, from motherly selfhood, 160  
and to spiritual love from lust of breed—, we find  
Duty therewith extended in the moral field.  
Thus 'tis (as missionaries tell) that head-hunters  
who seek relish in refinement of cruelty,  
wil yet to soft feelings respond at gentle appeal:  
my dog would do as well, coud he understand my speech:

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Yet tho' we see how birds in catering for their young  
stint not their self-devotion, and punctiliously observe  
distributiv justice; and that dutiful dogs  
urged by conflicting calls wil stand awhile perplex'd 170  
in dumb deliberation—ne'ertheless, because  
the true spiritual combat is unknown to brutes,  
moralists teaching virtue as an end-in-itself  
repudiate any sanction from motifs engaged  
on animal welfare, and make utility  
a cant term of reproach; tho' on their higher plane  
spiritual conduct also is utilitarian:  
For virtue subserveth the soul's comfort and joy,  
therewithal no less useful, nay more requisit  
than is material comfort to our full happiness 180  
in self-realization of perfected nature;  
the which a sound doctrin of pleasure wil confirm.

Denial of Use hath done our virtue wrong, while some  
belittle also our Ethick, saying the subject is  
of matter unknowledgeable in scientific sense,  
taking contingency from the imperfection of man.  
Granted, were all men perfect, none would seek virtue;  
nor should I now debate of it; but neither again  
wer all omniscient, would any seek knowledge:  
yet go we hunting after truth insatiably 190  
as the Saints after holiness, who, comforted  
by least attainment, persevere,—*Seeking the Lord  
whom they hav found*: and if a check or fault show more  
in Ethick, 'tis that the hunter is on fuller cry  
after true happiness than after mental truth;  
or he thinketh at least to hav well nosed his desire,  
and he nameth his quarry 'Satisfaction of soul.'  
Whereas of absolute Truth, whatever thatt may be,  
or is, he hath not an inkling, nay nor any cause,  
save in spiritual faith, ev'n to hope well of it. 200  
( 'Tis for such lack of stand that deep thinkers, who plot

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intellectual approaches to the unknown, wil lean  
unconsciously upon ethick, or in the end incline  
graciously to'ards it.) Now any deficiency  
is more discernible in an object known than in  
a thing unknown to us, and in the discussion of it  
ther is better likelihood of agreement.

Altho' good disposition (as Aristotle hath it)  
may be by beauty educated, and aspire  
to theoretic wisdom (as Plato would teach) 210  
and Ethick therewithal claim honor of the same rank  
that ideal philosophy ascribeth to man,  
yet, if for lack of faith he sink that claim, I see  
a thing of hap without place in Reality.

On no hand is't deny'd that terms of Right and Wrong  
are wholly pertinent to man's condition on earth;  
nor that, whatever his destiny may be, his origin  
was bestial and his first ethick a rudiment,  
that shifting ever and shaping in the story of man  
at every time is the index of his growth in grace; 220  
and, if the change of customs that the herd adopt  
for comfort and to insure what they most value in life,  
hath moral tendency upward, then thatt tendency is  
the animal sanction of virtue, and wil take honor as such.

But Duty instill'd with order is so almighty of kind  
that 'twil make Law of Habit, whence all social codes  
outlast their turn and time, and in arrear of life  
hold the common folk backward from their nobler vaunt,  
lagging and dragging, whether as a garment outgrown  
tatter'd and foolish, or as strong fetters and chains 230  
wherein *they lie fast-bound in misery and iron.*

Hence cometh all the need and fame of TEACHERS, men  
of inborn nobility, call'd Prophets of God,  
Saviours of society, Seers of the promised land,—  
thatt white-filleted company that Aeneas found

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circled around Musæus in the Elysian fields,  
the loved and loveable whose names liv evermore,  
the sainted pioneers of salvation, unto whom  
all wisdom won and all man's future hope is due;  
and with inspiration of their ampler air we see 240  
our Ethick split up shear and sharply atwain; two kinds  
diverse in kind ther be; the one of social need,  
lower, stil holding backward in the clutch of earth,  
from old animal bondage unredeem'd; the other  
higher and spiritual, that by personal affiance  
with beauty hath made escape, soaring away to where  
the Ring of Being closeth in the Vision of God.

Sticklers for equality wil hear nought of this,  
arguing that social is but a past-personal,  
personal a future-social, tenses of one verb, 250  
the *amatum* and *amabo* on the stem of 'love',  
virtue's pure nativ stock which hath no need of graft;  
—a doctrin kindly at heart, that cajolet alik  
diffidence of the ruler and conceit of the crowd,  
who in collusion float its credit; and awhile  
their ship of state runneth like the yacht in the race  
that with full bellying sail, for lack of seamanship,  
seemeth to forge ahead while it loseth leeway.

No Politick admitteth nor did ever admit  
the teacher into confidence: nay ev'n the Church, 260  
with hierachy in conclave compassing to install  
Saint Peter in Cæsar's chair, and thereby win for man  
the promises for which they had loved and worship'd Christ,  
relax'd his heav'nly code to stretch her temporal rule.  
For social Ethick with its legalized virtue  
is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,  
a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,  
the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,  
beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.  
Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270

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and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,  
can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;  
but should they look to find firm scientific ground,  
whereon to found their creed in the true history  
of social virtue and of its progress hitherto,  
'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him  
who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy  
to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard  
of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust  
betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280  
Chaldæan KISH and UR; while for all life today  
poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents  
and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,  
warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd  
the walls whence Terah fitted, but beneath those walls  
more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty  
of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct  
ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts  
the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil  
wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290  
a city and folk undremt of in archæology,  
trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,  
happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust  
the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—  
Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold,  
vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,  
cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems  
of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,  
craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;  
withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff 300  
a model in build and trim of such as ply today  
Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys  
gather'd to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack  
in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand  
his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp,

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his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas  
the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride  
was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film  
of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds  
that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold, 310  
wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow  
great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,  
impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work  
whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name  
and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up  
thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,  
finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men  
who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,  
had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320  
til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep  
he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile  
in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;  
for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones  
of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones  
lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughter'd at their post  
all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,  
in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp  
the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her dirge,  
lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330  
two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience  
whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,  
the uniform decoration of their young service,  
mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed  
to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth  
to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades  
congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

Leave Tigris now and Ur. Seek our our Aryan race  
by Gunga and Hydaspes in the teeming realm  
where Sakya Muni preach'd of gentleness and love, 340

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and took divinity before Christ came: see how  
at every Rajah's pyre, in Punjab or Kashmire,  
in Vijayanóggar, Kalikata and Udaipur,  
for liv-long centuries the mild Hindus hav burnt  
their multitudinous girl-concubines alive,  
and still beneath our lax imperial rule wil deem  
any honest outlawry of their ritual Suttee  
a tyrannous impiety of our western manners;  
which none the less withheld not of our island kings  
the last Henry, styled first Defendër of the Faith, 350  
from slaying his wives at will; nor was he for such crime  
less esteem'd of the folk; altho' judged as a man  
by pagan ethick or christian or by the insight  
of poet or historian, more despicable  
than we need to suppose thatt old monarch of Ur.

See how cross-eyed the pride of our world-wide crusade  
against Nigerian slavery, while the London poor  
in their Victorian slums lodged closer and filthier  
than the outraged alien; and under liberty's name  
our Industry is worse fed and shut out from the sun.— 360  
In every age and nation a like confusion is found.

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IF DUTY held us long, now as in the old adage  
PLEASURE may follow after, taking like second rank  
in Plato's myth, as I twist it: wherein we traced  
Duty from the selfhood of individual life  
growing to reach communion with life eternal;  
while in the younger horse was pleasur intensified  
by love, untill it issueth in the love of God.  
And yet hath pleasure truly its main stronghold in Self,  
because the greatest pleasure that man knoweth, is aye 370  
the pleasur of life, even as his chief displeasur is death.

This Life-joy, like the breath-kiss of the all-ambient air



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is a self-holocaust, their sheer asceticism  
is justified in them; the more because the bent  
and nativ color of mind that leadeth them aloof,  
or driveth, is that very delicacy of sense,  
whereby a pinprick or a momentary whiff  
or hairbreadth motion freeth the detent of force  
that can distract them wholly from their high pursuit:  
wherefor they fly God's garden, whose forbidden fruit 450  
(seemeth to them) was sweeten'd by a fiend's desire  
to make them fond and foolish. Nature ne'ertheless  
singeth loud in her prison, and for all ecstasy  
these mystics find no language but to echo again  
the psalm of her captivity; nay, furthermore,  
the doctrin esoteric in their rapt divines  
and their diviner poets—this the novice knew—  
is the reincarnation of their renounced desire.

Repudiation of pleasur is a reason'd folly  
of imperfection. Ther is no motiv can rebate 460  
or decompose the intrinsic joy of activ life,  
whereon all function whatsoever in man is based.  
Consider how this mortal sensibility  
hath a wide jurisdiction of range in all degrees,  
from mountainous gravity to imperceptible  
faintest tenuities:—The imponderable fragrance  
of my window-jasmin, that from her starry cup  
of red-stemm'd ivory invadeth my being,  
as she floateth it forth, and wantoning unabash'd  
asserteth her idea in the omnipotent blaze 470  
of the tormented sun-ball, checquering the grey wall  
with shadow-tracery of her shapely fronds; this frail  
unique spice of perfumery, in which she holdeth  
monopoly by royal licence of Nature,  
is but one of a thousand angelic species,  
original beauties that win conscience in man:  
a like marvel hangeth o'er the rosebed, and where

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the honeysuckle escapeth in serpentine sprays  
from its dark-cloister'd clamber thru' the old holly-bush,  
spreading its joybunches to finger at the sky 480  
in revel above rivalry. Legion is their name;  
Lily-of-the-vale, Violet, Verbena, Mignonette,  
Hyacinth, Heliotrope, Sweet-briar, Pinks and Peas,  
Lilac and Wallflower, or such white and purple blooms  
that sleep i' the sun, and their heavy perfumes withhold  
to mingle their heart's incense with the wonder-dreams,  
love-laden prayers and reveries that steal forth from earth,  
under the dome of night: and tho' these blossomy breaths,  
that hav presumed the title of their gay genitors,  
enter but singly into our neighboring sense, that hath 490  
no panorama, yet the mind's eye is not blind  
unto their multitudinous presences:—I know  
that if odour wer visible as color is, I'd see  
the summer garden aureoled in rainbow clouds,  
with such warfare of hues as a painter might choose  
to show his sunset sky or a forest aflame;  
while o'er the country-side the wide clover-pastures  
and the beanfields of June would wear a mantle, thick  
as when in late October, at the drooping of day  
the dark grey mist arising blotteth out the land 500  
with ghostly shroud. Now these and such-like influences  
of tender specialty must not—so fine they be—  
fall in neglect and all their loveliness be lost,  
being to the soul deep springs of happiness, and full  
of lovingkindness to the natural man, who is apt  
kindly to judge of good by comfortable effect.  
Thus all men ever hav judged the wholesomness of food  
from the comfort of body ensuing thereupon,  
whereby all animals retrieve their proper diet;  
but if when in discomfort 'tis for pleasant hope 510  
of health restored we swallow nauseous medicines,  
so mystics use asceticism, yea, and no man

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readier than they to assert eventual happiness  
to justify their conduct. Whence it is not strange  
(for so scientific minds in search of truth digest  
assimilable hypotheses) they should extend  
their pragmatism, and from their happiness deduce  
the very existence and the natur of God, and take  
religious consolation for the ground of faith:  
as if the pleasur of life wer the sign-manual 520  
of Nature when she set her hand to her covenant.

But man, vain of his Reason and thinking more to assure  
its independence, wil disclaim complicity  
with human emotion; and regarding his Mother  
deemeth it dutiful and nobler in honesty  
coldly to criticize than purblindly to love;  
and in pride of this quarrel he hath been led in the end  
to make distinction of kind 'twixt Pleasur and Happiness;  
observing truly enough how one may hav pleasure  
and yet miss happiness; but this warpeth the sense 530  
and common use of speech, since all tongues in the world  
call children and silly folk happy and sometimes ev'n brutes.

The name of happiness is but a wider term  
for the unalloy'd conditions of the Pleasur of Life,  
attendant on all function, and not to be deny'd  
to th' soul, unless forsooth in our thought of nature  
spiritual is by definition unnatural.

But I would not thus wrong nature; rather say I  
that as man realizeth his higher energies,  
the quality and value of his pleasures wil so change, 540  
that tho' the animal life-joy persist thru'out,  
yet his transported joy developing thereon  
cometh by excelence to need a special term.  
And Aristotle in his tenth book thus summeth it—  
“Whatso thatt faculty may be which hath in man  
“natural governance and apprehendeth things  
“noble and divine,—it is the energy (so saith he)

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"of thatt faculty in its proper excelence, which is  
"the Perfect Happiness;" and with his predicate  
he assumeth the less perfect also, and lower states. 550

But these philosophers—their Ethick being concern'd  
with man's perfection—used the abstracted terms whereby  
they had pre-defined distinctions, which as they diverged  
in separat culmination obscured identity.

'Twas for that reason, I guess, that Aristotle himself  
so harpeth on his doctrin, as if he was aware  
that his conclusion had somehow miss'd its full premiss:  
But if we see Spiritual, Mental and Animal  
to be gradations merged together in growth and mix'd  
in their gradations, and that the animal pleasure 560  
runneth thru'out all grades heartening all energies,  
then Aristotle's wisdom goeth without saying;  
and the actual complexity of human conduct  
wil appear nature's order in the condition of growth;  
and so the trouble and wonderment of baulk'd insight  
may all be presently sponged from the treatises.

Altho' in the distinction of pleasures good and bad  
the unparagon'd nobility of the great virtues  
standeth without controversy among them that know  
—who instill them as duties—, yet they hav writ no rule 570  
nor rubric whereby conduct can in lesser affairs  
accommodate these principles, when they conflict  
in upright personalities, nor square their use  
with the intricat contingencies that knit our lives,  
and the interaction of unrelated sequences.  
In thatt uncharted jungle a good man wil go right,  
while an ill disposition wil miss and go wrong:  
yet in the worst we stil may find something to praise,  
in the lame child that stumbleth, or the canker'd bud;  
ev'n the poor blasted promise of desiderat fruit 580  
hath true relation to the absent beauty thereof.

Forever on the asses bridge and in the ship of fools

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life is agog; and there the Muse hath set her stage,  
and in humorous compact with philosophy  
hideth her godlike face beneath a grinning mask,  
and donning the gay motley of idiotic man  
empersonateth him in his chance dilemmas;  
by the eternal comedy of the unfitness of things  
beguiling the disconsolat with sympathy  
and cheering contemplation with æsthetic mirth. 590  
Full many hav found happiness toiling all their time  
thus disporting with truth; and at carving such toys  
hav thru' love of children become Teachers of men:  
But here *I wol nat han to do of swich matere:*

Since then all promise of spiritual advancement  
lieth in two things, good disposition and (as 'twas said)  
right education, it followeth here to speak of these.

First then of Disposition.—Unless ther truly be  
more good than bad absolutely in the make of man,  
ther is no security for him and little hope, 600  
except the inherent harmony and unity of good  
be such as must in the end outweigh the surplusage  
of all discordant enmity; and this well may be:  
but should we inquire if Nature hath by any means  
inclined man's disposition to the virtuous choice,  
we may find how she hath done this, and by the energy  
of the imitativ faculty hath assured her end.  
“For Mimicry is inborn in man from childhood up:  
“and in this differeth he from other animals,  
“being the most imitativ: and his first approach 610  
“to learning maketh he in mimicry, and hath delight  
“in imitations of all kinds.” I would indeed  
that Aristotle had set this pregnant verity  
in forefront of his Ethick also, as now 'tis found  
to stablish his Poetick; for the assumption of it

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here and there in the Morals escapeth notice  
and all the consequences thereof are unseen.  
But if the cradled child imitateth the shows  
that happen around him, he for-sure wil most attend  
to those that most attract, and must therefore be drawn 620  
and held by the inborn love of Beauty unconsciently  
of preference to imitate the more beautiful things.  
And because Virtue is an activity, and lieth not  
in doctrin and theory but in practice and conduct,  
co-ordinating potencies into energy,  
(and here 'tis Aristotle again speaketh, not I)  
the preferential imitation of right action  
is THE HABIT OF VIRTUE: and thus a child well-bred  
in good environment, so soon as he is aware  
of personality, wil know and think himself 630  
a virtuous being and instinctivly, in the proud  
realization of Self common to all animals,  
becometh to be his own ideal, a such-a-one  
as would WILL and DO this (saith he) and never do thatt,  
refraining there from shame, consenting here for love,  
winning new beauty of soul from the embrace of beauty,  
and strength by practised combat against folly and wrong,  
to perfect as he may his idea of himself.

Spiritual life being thus imagin'd in the child  
thru' conscient personality and love of beauty, 640  
—which on so tender a plant budding hath power to bear  
the richest fruit of all creation, incomparable—  
ther is nought in all his nurtur of more intrinsic need  
than is the food of Beauty: as mammal's milk to his flesh,  
which admitteth no proxy, so Beauty is to his soul,  
that calleth for this comforting of nature's breast,  
tho' its outcries be unheard when it pineth in pain:  
and since the hunger of mimicry is so strong in him,  
that in the lack of milk 'twil ravin gall, and draw  
infection and death from evil as quickly as life from good,

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the first intrinsic need in education is found. 651

Thus Christ, who knew what was in man and taught  
man's perfect happiness to be the wonted realm  
of heav'n within his heart, spake thus **Take hede** (he said)

**Se that ye offende not won of these litell wons:**  
and once again on this wise, "If ther be any sin  
"unpardonable even in the wide compassion of God,  
"tis the denial and blasphemy of his Holy Spirit,  
"and the quenching in others of its nascent flame."

Delicat and subtle are the dealings of nature, 660  
whereby the emotionable sense secretly is touch'd  
to awareness and by glimpse of heav'nly vision drawn  
within the attraction of the creativ energy  
that is the ultimat life of all being soe'er:  
While Science sitteth apart in her exile, attent  
on her other own invisibles; and working back  
to the atoms, she handleth their action to harness  
the gigantic forces of eternal motion,  
in serviceable obedience to man's mortal needs;  
and not to be interrupted nor call'd off her task, 670  
dreaming, amid the wonders of her sightly works,  
thru' her infinitesimals to arrive at last  
at the unsearchable immensities of Goddes realm.

But while the intellectual faculty is yet unborn,  
spiritual things to children are even as Music is,  
thatt firstborn pleasur of animal conscience that now  
hath for its human honour its origin forgot;  
the which a child absorbeth readily and without thought,  
tho' in after years, if thatt initiation hav lack'd,  
scarce can a man by grammar come at the elements. 680  
Their twain affinity may be seen also in this,  
that both are companied by the same full delight  
of progress in performance, while the same method  
serveth for both; if but the teacher be himself  
virtuous or musical—an examplar as such,

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he wil be keenly follow'd, and often in his love  
that his pupil surpass him is his best reward.

Of intellectual training 'tis not here to tell;  
thatt cometh later, and then the trouble is evermore  
the lack of teachers; yet wer teachers plentiful, 690  
and gentle environment as common as bramble-scrub,  
never coud human wit discern to accommodate  
the countless idiosyncracies of mind withal;  
indeterminable are they and never can be told.

But 'twer well to consider in what a fusty crypt  
the awakening mind is caged when—like a butterfly  
that newly hath slipp'd its crysalis to sport i' the sun—  
it thrusteth out its finely adapted tentacles  
in their first palping movements to the encounter of life,  
with confidence exploring its nativ yearnings. 700

How, when this apprehensiv expectancy is met  
by fenced obstruction! How, when ev'n the syllables  
which with such duteous pains the child had learn'd to tongue,  
the secret spell whereat the fabled treasure-house  
should open its doors—how, when thatt magic Sesamē  
hath proved a foreign jargon and, like a rusty key,  
by long mishandling already hath hamper'd the lock!  
How should not childish effort, thus thwarted and teased,  
recoil dishearten'd bruized and stupefy'd beneath  
the rough-shod inculcation of inculcated minds, 710  
case-harden'd by their own thoughtless reiterations?

The mud-fish may be happy and at home in the pond,  
but live Imagination, conscient of its joy,  
ranketh oft with the dunces in such scholarship,  
finding its happiness in freedom to mature  
the personality of its nativ potency.  
Others in after-growth at heavy cost repair  
their early damage, since in intellectual things  
all errors are remediable; but 'tis not so  
in the spiritual life, nay ev'n the soul wash'd pure 720



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of absorb'd taint may take a strange gloss of the lye.

Of two young thoro'breeds galoping neck to neck  
I'd choose the colt that with least effort held his course.  
Of two runners abreast my liking would crown him  
who had greater grace of limb and show'd no trouble of face,  
tho' he by such complacency might miss the prize:  
But virtue in the soldier is the martyr's heart  
that, battling for supremacy, out-stayeth defeat,  
firing the citadel ere he yield it to the foe:  
and 'tis nobility that pulleth our favour 730  
upon the weaker side in any unequal match.

Now in spiritual combat, altho' I must deem  
them the most virtuous who with least effort excell,  
yet, virtue being a conflict, moralisers hold  
that where conflict is hardest virtue must be at best;  
and in the rub of life and physical hindrance  
a man who has striven heroically and done great deeds,  
in spite of frailty or bodily disease or pain,  
may win more admiration and praise in the end than he  
who with comfort to himself, indolently as it wer, 740  
hath done as well; nay, for the very impediments  
may ev'n be envied, as old navigators wer  
in the glory they had got to hav outridden their storms.  
And yet from Zion's hill-top to the Dead-Sea shore,  
between the Teacher sitting on the Mount and them,  
the nethermost unfortunats, that cannot learn,—  
in all the mid-mass crowding on the flowery slopes,  
hearers o' the Word, ther is little difference to be told:  
The same incarnat traitor routeth in all hearts;  
nay, since 'tis an æsthetic delicacy of mind 750  
that, refining the enticement of carnal pleasure,  
voideth the shame, the elect are oft in straits extreme:  
the mastery of warriorship, their apparent grace,  
was won by disciplin of deadly strife: in them  
ease is no indolence: indolence rather is theirs

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who, ill-disposed to training, are unexercised  
in good habit of war; and 'tis the lack thereof  
maketh the soldier unready and the conflict so hard,  
rather than any unwonted virulence or rage  
of the onslaught; for thatt same happeneth anon to all. 760

AND here my thought plungeth into the darksome grove  
and secret penetralia of ethic lore, wherein  
I hav wander'd often and long and thought to know my way,  
and now shall go retracing my remember'd paths,  
tho' no lute ever sounded there nor Muse hath sung,  
deviously in the obscure shadows, and none follow me  
entering where erst I enter'd, and all enter free,  
at the great clearing made by Socrates of yore,  
when he said KNOW THYSELF; for true to his chief premiss  
that ignorance is the root of all men's folly, he taught 770  
to turn the lamp of Reason inwardly upon the mind.  
And truly with thatt keen *Γνώθι σεαυτόν* of his  
was great felling of trees: for not Socrates knew  
nor any hath ever kenn'd how man thinketh; and less  
how thought thinketh itself; nor how in thatt province  
Reason hath right to rule; nor of what stuff the reins  
can be, wherewith the Charioteer bridled the steeds  
in that same vision of his which Plato saith he told  
to Phædrus, as they sat together on the banks  
of the Ilissus talking of the passions of men. 780

All terrestrial Life, in all functions and motions,  
operateth thru' alliance of living entities  
disparat in their structure but logically  
correlated in action under some final cause.  
Suchlike co-ordinations may be acquired in man  
with reason'd purpose consciently, as when a learner  
on viol or flute diligently traineth his hand

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to the intricat fingering of the stops and strings;  
or may be innate, as the spontaneous flight of birds;  
or antenatal and altogether inconscient, 790  
as the food-organs, call'd vegetativ because  
such cellular connivance is the life of plants.

The main co-ordinations whereon life hangeth  
wer ever automatous, and such states when acquired  
tend to become self-working as they are perfected,  
dropping out of our ken: the proverb truly spake  
*Habit is second nature*, and 'twil function best  
without superintendence, for the least brain-wave  
or timid rippling of self-consciousness can rob  
the bodily movements of their nativ grace. 800

Now these perfected unify'd organities,  
whether of inconscient birth or such as when acquired  
proudly stand off from conscience, all act in response  
to external stimulants that vary in kind, and range  
from mere material contact to untraceable thought.

Thus the digestiv kind is stirr'd by touch of food  
within the body, or by the sight or sound or smell  
of the object, or ev'n by the unconscious thought thereof;  
and thence thru' appetite by mere thought of the sense;  
and can decipher a message in the secret code 810  
of language, and prick up at sound of the symbol:

For never can those privy-councilors in the brain  
withhold official knowledge from the corporat mind;  
ther is no deliberation or whisper'd thought, not ev'n  
unspoken intention among them, but it wil leak out  
to thatt swarming intelligence where life began,  
and where ideas wander at liberty to find  
their procreativ fellowship; thatt fluid sea  
in which all problems, spiritual or logical  
æsthetic mathematic or practic, resolve 820  
melting as icebergs launch'd on the warm ocean-stream:  
and wheresoe'er this corporat alchemy is at best,

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'tis call'd by all men GENIUS, and its aptitudes  
like virtuous disposition may be inherited.

Thus must all kind of stimulus hav come some way  
across the misty march-land, whereon men would fix  
their disputable boundary between Matter and Mind,  
—as every sensation must suffer translation  
ere it can mediate in the live machinery  
of any final cause or purpose: whence 'twould seem 830  
that science went astray thinking to appropriate  
some nervous reactions wholly to her material sphere,  
and rather should hav thought to extend the mental field.

Now this spontaneous life oweth nought to Reason  
(the conscient faculty which Socrates invoked);  
and so her claim to be the "very consciousness  
of things judging themselves" is "vain above measure":  
for every Essence hath its own Idea, and so  
cometh thereby to its own full conscient life in man:  
for-sure the idea of Beauty is not Reason's idea, 840  
nor hath Reason the idea of Courage or of Mirth,  
of Faith or Love or Poetry or of Music's delight;  
if Reason as an essence owneth to any idea,  
let her make good her claim and therewith be content:  
so be it; and surely Reason's property wil be  
the idea of Order;—and if so, I think to find  
how by the very natur of her own faculty  
she was deceived to imagin its universal scope;  
for since all natur is order'd (nor none wil deny  
that 'tis by Reason alone we are of such order aware), 850  
all things must of their ordinance come in her court  
for judgment; and 'twas thus Pythagoras coud hold  
NUMBER to be the universal essence of things:  
nay, see the starry atoms in the seed-plot of heav'n  
stripp'd to their nakedness are nothing but Number;  
and see how Mathematick rideth as a queen  
cheer'd on her royal progress thru'out nature's realm;

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see how physical Science, which is Reason's trade  
and high profession, booketh ever and docketeth  
all things in order and pattern; how Philosophy, 860  
shuttling out in the unknown like a hungry spider,  
blindly spinneth her geometric webs, testing  
and systematizing even her own disorders,  
her solipsism and her gossamer ontologies  
gnostic or cabbalist: and 'twas thus Socrates  
coud evoke Reason to order and disciplin the mind—  
the divine Logos that should shine in the darkness,—  
a good physician who must heal himself withal.

[The assumed docility is by English moralists  
term'd the 'Good Will' and fetch'd in as 'tw'er from without;  
yet 'tis but the old animal instinct of selfhood 871  
to'ard realization, which continueth on  
with the animal promoted to spiritual life;  
wherein desire for betterment is the promise  
and premiss of all virtue; or if the willingness  
be but desire of knowledge, thatt wil find the goal  
where Truth and Virtue and Beauty are all as one.]

Now seeing the aim of Socrates we must inquire  
what the Mind's cöntents are; how disorder'd; and why  
ther should in the good mind be any disorder at all. 880

*What the Mind is*, this thing bidden to know itself?  
First I bethink me naturally of every man  
as a unique creature, a personality  
in whom we lucidly distinguish body and mind,  
and talk readily of either tho' inseparable  
and mutually dependent, together or apart  
the created expression of Universal Mind.  
And of the body I think as the machinery  
of our terrestrial life evolving towards conscience  
in the Ring of Reality; and thence of the mind 890

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as thatt evolved conscience, the which in every-one is different, as the body differeth also in each.

And human Intellect I see form'd and compact of the essential Ideas, wherewith soever each man hath come in contact personally, and in so far as he is kindly disposed to absorb their influences to build his personality; and since all ideas come to him thru' the senses, thatt old proviso *nisi ipse intellectus* is futile to me; for *intellectus* here seemeth to exclude itself, 900 as being thatt all-receptiv conscient energy which is the mind of man; thatt ultimat issue of the arch-creativ potency of Being, wherefrom the senses took existence. Thus I come to think that if the mind held all ideas in plenitude 'twould be complete, at one with natur and harmonized with as good harmony as we may find in nature.

Now as our optic science teacheth pure white light to be the consummation of all the color-bands into which by diffraction it can be separated, 910 whereof if any ray went missing, the sunlight wer impure and imperfect (or so we may think); a suchlike imperfection must be in all men's minds, because the complemental ideas parcel'd in each are incomplete, being only such as thatt one man may hav happ'd on, and those only in the measure whereby he is tuned to take cognisance of them: thus it is all men differ each from each, since neither environment nor disposition can ever in any two men be the same or alike, and therefor (as was said) 920 true individuality within the species would seem reach'd in mankind. Again likewise 'tis seen how national mentalities are mutually incomprehensible and irreconcilable; since each group as it rose was determin'd apart

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by conditions of life which none other could share,  
by climate, language, and historic tradition  
estranging evermore; nor are such obstinate bonds  
the weaker for any intrinsic absurdity:

Nay, see the Armenian folk in their snow-burrows, 930  
as if distrustful of their high mountainous plateau  
between the seas, have riveted their patriotism  
by stubborn adherence to an ancient heresy,  
a paradox anent the two natures of Christ,  
which some theologic bishop, peering in the fog  
of his own exhalations, thought pleasing to God;  
altho' no creature might possibly understand it.

Again from this same cause it will follow no less  
that men commonly run so near to the average;  
for the animal ideas are common property 940  
and, being the greatest common measure of all mankind,  
will stand-out as the mean statistical features.

Again we now may see—and 'tis pleasant to see—  
how simple characters have such extreme beauty,  
for that the soul's nobility consisteth not  
in riches of imagination or intellect  
but in harmony of Essences, which hath full power  
where a few fundamentals in purity attain  
their self-coordination; as honest pots and pans  
may for their unsophisticated beauty excell 950  
a prize diploma-picture of our academy:  
like as in music, when true voices blend in song,  
the perfect intonation of the major triad  
is sweetest of all sounds; its inviting embrace  
resolveth all discords; and all the ambitious flights  
of turbulent harmony come in the end to rest  
with the fulfilment of its liquidating cloze.

Again we hence rebut that old dilemma of Art,  
which would set man in lordly enmity against nature  
for that his pensive play transcendeth her beauty; 960

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—as when Sebastian preludeth, all her voices  
that ever hav reach'd our ears are crest-fal'n and abash'd:  
for tho' man cannot wield her infinit resource  
of delicacy and strength, yet hath he in lieu thereof  
a range triumphant, where his exorbitant thought  
defying Space and Time hath power to blend all things  
visible and invisible, and freely redispose  
every essence that he knoweth, to parcel them at will—  
or so he thinketh—, like an occult magician  
whose summons all spirits must attend and obey, 970  
from the heart-blaze of heaven to the unvisited deep;  
tho' he hav no wizardry to exorcise them withal.  
Now this dilemma (I say) is rebutted hereby,  
because man's faculty of creation, rare in him  
and not at his command, is but Nature herself,  
who danceth in her garden at the blossöming-time  
'mong the flowers of her setting; and tho' true it be  
that Art needeth as full devotion and diligence  
in the performance as doth Virtue, yet i' the mind  
of the artist Nature's method surely is on this wise;— 980  
the Ideas which thru' the senses hav found harborage,  
being come to mortal conscience work-out of themselves  
their right co-ordinations and, creatively  
seeking expression, draw their natural imagery  
from the same sensuous forms whereby they found entrance;  
thus linking up with all the long tradition of Art.

The manner of this magic is purest in musick,  
but by the learner is seen more clearly in poetry,  
wherein each verbal symbol exposeth its idea;  
so that 'tis manifest by what promptings of thought 990  
the imaginativ landscape is built and composed,  
and how horizon'd: And the secret of a poem  
lieth in this intimat echo of the poet's life.

Now in its selfcreativity the manner of Art  
cannot be simulated, altho' Mimicry



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is Beauty's cradle: But, as in the Spirit of Man  
all manner of grades are found, so wil it be in his Art,  
with such disorder of thought as is not here to tell;  
for every man, whom Beauty hath laid beneath her spell,  
—tho' but by glimpse or dream, and him full ignorant 1000  
of what idea hath moved him and ev'n by what means;—  
wil feel about to express some mintage of himself,  
by imitation or birdlike hymeneal lilt,  
to fix his hold on joy, his COGITO ERGO SUM.  
Thus may a jingle of words fasten his faith on God,  
as schoolboys memorize their lesson better in rhyme.

Inasmuch then as the ideas in any one mind  
are a promiscuous company muster'd at random,  
ther wil be such disorder as Reason can perceive  
and may hav skill to amend; but tho' we grant her art 1010  
valid in principle and salutary in effect,  
the debit of failure is heavy in her accounts.  
Yet we discredit not all Medicine because  
ther be incurable maladies that end in death,—  
nor yet because the leech, when he is call'd in to heal  
an indigestiv stomach, can hav no dealing  
directly with the embroil'd co-ordinating cells,—  
and, for the lack of any intelligent knowledge  
of their intimat bickerings, wil hav recourse  
to palliatives and sentimental assurances 1020  
of favorable conditions, exercise and air,  
hoping thus to entice them to a better behaviour,—  
or observing some chemical excess in their chyme  
wil deftly neutralize it with a pinch of salt;  
so we shall also allow Reason her claim to rule:  
and to judge by oneself, as each man must, I find  
Reason wil diagnose the common ailment of Mind  
a lack of harmony; for with the Ideas at war  
—now one Idea in mastery and now another,

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acting at call o' the moment indiscriminately,— 1030  
the man is foolish, unreasonable as we say,  
inept, without set purpose, weak of will; whereas  
if all should work together in concert, he wil be  
determin'd and consistent: And I see man's Will  
is here no independent concentrated force,  
like the steel spring box'd-up in a French clock and wound  
for local distribution, but is rather itself  
the concentrating of a predistributed  
intrinsic power;—the emotions, passions and desires,  
concurrent with the Ideas, being surely of themselves 1040  
wilful enough, and able among themselves at strife  
to make a fool, and in co-ordination a sage.

WILL, then, in the good mind a sustain'd harmony,  
is in the bad a dissonance, or it may be a strange  
co-ordination, or the tyranny of one idea;  
from which our great civic convulsions mostly arise  
and popular rebellions, when the Demagog  
hath fulminated some mighty essential idea,  
which entereth wildly into the loose minds of the herd  
and, finding there no governance, runneth riot 1050  
and, drawing all wilful authority to itself,  
wil seem the only live thing; like a firebrand at night  
flaring afar, that i' the sunlight wer a troublous smoke:  
and if such insurrection by contagion attain  
predominance uncontrollable, to the overthrow  
of any existing rule, then the Will of the folk  
is dubb'd by history's pen the WILL OF GOD.  
But since this over-mastering prevalent idea  
may be good in itself while it wreaketh but wrong,  
and since I see that all human activities 1060  
may be order'd equally for ravage or defence,  
Reason herself here questioneth me how I trust  
her mere ordering of life to make for happiness—  
whereto my answer is my good faith in what I hav writ.

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How the mind of man from inconscient existence  
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning  
to'ard spiritual conscience hath been duly told:  
And Reason—being essentially (as in place 'twas found)  
the idea of Order, and thus itself the appurtenance  
of essences, with them passing from physical 1070  
unto spiritual order in a mind endued  
with conscience of the higher spiritual essences—  
Reason (say I) wil rise to awareness of its rank  
in the Ring of Existence, where man looketh up  
to the first cause of all; and wil itself decree  
and order discreetly the attitude of the soul  
seeking self-realization in the vision of God,  
becoming at the last thatt arch-conscience of all,  
to which the Greek sage who possess'd it made appeal.

The attraction of this motion is our conscience of it, 1080  
our love of wisdom and of beauty; and the attitude  
of those attracted wil be joyful obedience  
with reverence to'ard the omnificent Creator  
and First Cause, whose Being is thatt beauty and wisdom  
which is to be apprehended only and only approach'd  
by right understanding of his creation, and found  
in thatt habit of faith which some thinkers hav styled  
*The Life of Reason*; and this only true bond of love  
and reasonable relation (if relation ther be)  
'twixt creature and creator, man and nature's God, 1090  
the which we call *Religion*,—is fundamental,  
physically and metaphysically in fashion  
or force undistinguishable from Duty itself:  
sprung from the same primal reality, it also  
aborted in like dolorous superstition, when  
the first-born intimations of spiritual life  
scared man's animal mind, that in childish terror  
seeking protection from the unseen, fenced his dark cave  
with codes of fearful fantasy and—flush'd by the stir

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of the irresistible impulse which drave him (yea, still 1100  
driveth) with fierce exultation (albeit we deplore  
thatt barbarous aberration),—with credulous magic  
cloggeth his airy spirit and discrediteth  
his Reason and Faith alike . . . . so old a trouble and great  
that the honest indictment of the Epicurean  
goeth unrefuted, and his famous verse TANTUM  
RELIGIO POTUIT SUADERE MALORUM  
yet ringeth true as when he thought to benefit  
mankind, and from his woes rescue him for ever,  
drowning the thought of God from off the face of the earth  
in his deluge of atoms; and made in the mind 1111  
a second Void, the which his sect should keep inane  
by the inventiv levity of their enlightenment;  
til, as with animals that hav fasted too long  
and aking within for their emptiness wil eat  
too greedily, we see in our fellows today  
fresh recrudescence of forgonn superstition;  
the while our generation, sicken'd by the grime  
of murky slums, slag-heaps and sooty bushes,  
wil plan garden-cities and for her soilure make 1120  
reddition to Nature, replanting the fair lands  
which our industrial grandsires disaforested.

This hankering after lost Beauty, in sickness of heart  
a disconsolat sentiment, is the remnant grace  
of nature's covenant, the starved germ *athirst for God*  
*ev'n for the living God*, that singeth in the psalm  
QUEMADMODUM CERVUS, and now amidst the blank  
tyranny of ugliness maketh many a rebel  
pining for enlargement and plotting to recall  
thatt old arrant exile who, for all her mischief, 1130  
hid neath her cloak the master-key of happiness.

In truth "spiritual animal" wer a term for man  
nearer than "rational" to define his genus;  
Faith being the humanizer of his brutal passions,

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the clarifier of folly and medicine of care,  
the clue of reality, and the driving motiv  
of thatt self-knowledge which teacheth the ethick of life.

And yet hath PRAYER, the heav'n-breathing foliage of faith,  
found never a place in ethick: for Philosophy  
filtering out delusions from her theory of life, 1140  
in dread of superstition gave religion away  
to priests and monks, who rich in their monopoly  
furbish and trim the old idols, that they dare not break,  
for fear of the folk and need of good disciplin.  
But since all men alike, in any strain of heart  
or great emotion of soul, credulous or sceptic, fall  
instinctivly to prayer for thatt solace and strength  
which they who use the habit may be seen to hav found—  
nay, had Prayer no effect other than reverence  
for the self-knowledge, which the Greek enjoin'd, whereby  
'tis sovran to bind character, concentrate Will, 1151  
and purify intention—nay, ev'n so 'twould claim  
a place among the causes of determin'd flux.

Ah! tho' it may be a simple thing in reach of all,  
Best ever is rare, a toilsome guerdon; and prayer is like  
those bodily exercises that athletes wil use,  
which each must humbly learn, and ere he win to power  
so diligently practise, and in such strict course  
as wil encroach unkindly on the agreements of life:  
whence men slouch in the laxity that they call ease, 1160  
rather than rouse to acquiring thatt strength, without which  
the body cannot know the pleasur of its full ease,  
the leisur of strength in the hard labor of life.

Now every emotion hath the bodily expression  
beseeming each; and since the body cannot be  
without some attitude, so Prayer wil hav its own:  
and here just as in any athletic exercise

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ther be postures and motions foolish in themselves  
and often undignified, so too the postur of prayer  
may shame our pride of spirit, which would grudge the limbs  
warrant of entry upon her sacred solitudes; 1171  
albeit the body come there in full abject guise  
to do submission and pay fealty to the soul:

And since our speech, in its mere vocal cries and calls,  
hath less natural beauty and true significance  
than the bodily gestures which convey our desires,  
so ev'n the words of prayer wil lack in dignity  
and seem impertinent; as full often they be,  
and ever had been, unless man's language had upgrown  
from makeshift unto mastery of his thought, and learn'd 1180  
by its fine musing art to redeem for his soul  
the beauty of holiness, marrying creatively  
his best earthly delight with his heav'nliest desire,  
when he calleth on God, *Send forth thy light and truth  
that they may lead me and bring me unto thy Holy Hill,  
to thatt fair place which is the joy of the whole earth.*

See! ther is never dignity in a concourse of men,  
save only as some spiritual gleam hearteneth the herd.  
Any idea whatsoe'er new-born to consciousness,  
if it infect the folk, taketh repetend life 1190  
and exuberant difformity of disorder'd growth  
from physical communion of emotion and thought;  
and of its nascent appetency 'twil embrace  
affinity in its host, to stagger and eliminate  
all other ideas, thus impropotionably  
surmounting its own province in Nature's order;  
so that unless itself it be a thing of Beauty,  
insurmountable of kind, more beauteous in excess—  
as when the glow reverberating in a golden cup  
multiplyeth the splendour,—it cometh that the herd, 1200  
being in its empassionment ever irrational,  
wil even of harmless enthusiasm breed disgrace.

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Thus in our English sport, the spectacular games,  
where tens of thousands flock throttling the entrance-gates  
like sheep to th' pen, wherein they sit huddled to watch  
the fortune o' the football, ther is often here and there  
mid the seething glomeration of thatt ugly embankment  
of gazing faces, one that came to enjoy the sight  
knowingly, and yet looketh little on the contest: to him  
the crowd is the spectacle; its wrestle and agony 1210  
is more than the actors, and its contagion so thick  
and irresistible, that ere he feel surprise  
he too may find himself, yea philosophy and all,  
carried away—as when a strong swimmer in the sea  
who would regain the shore, is by the headlong surf  
toss'd out of action, and like a drifted log roll'd up  
breathless and unresisting on the roaring beach.

But if he join the folk, when at the cloze of Lent  
they kneel in the vast dimness of a city church,  
while on the dense silence the lector's chant treadeth 1220  
from cadence to cadence the long dolorous way  
of the great passion of Christ,—or anon when they rise  
to free their mortal craving in the exultant hymn  
that ringeth with far promise of eternal peace . . .  
or should it happen to him, in strange lands far from home,  
to watch the Moslem host, when at their hour of prayer  
they troop in wild accoutrement their long-drill'd line  
motionless neath the sun upon the Arabian sands,  
hush'd to th' Imám's solemn invocation of God,  
as their proud tribal faith savagely draweth strength 1230  
from the well-spring of life,—then at the full Amen  
of their deep-throated respond he wil feel his spirit  
drawn into kinship and their exaltation his own;  
the more that he himself can be no part thereof,  
incomprehensible because comprehending:  
—and they be muddied pools whereat the herd water.

Such is the dignity of prayer in the common folk;

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and its humility is the robe of intellect.

So whenever it hath been by some mystics renounced  
in sanctuary of their sublime abstraction—as if 1240  
utter abnegation had left no manners else to abjure,—  
they appear to lack in use and duty of fellowship.

Yet in such solitaires, pallid clerks of heaven,  
souls blanch'd for lack of sunjoys (as 'twould seem to hav  
been),

their contemplation (it may be) of very intensity  
generateth ideas of higher irradiance;  
for ideas born to human personality,  
having their proper attractions like as atom or cell,  
from soul to soul pass freely; and 'twas this mystery,  
whereof they kenn'd the need who set that clause i' the creed,  
which, compelling belief in the COMMUNION OF SAINTS, 1251  
foldeth the sheep in pastures of eternal life.

Nor doubt I that as this thinking machinery  
perisheth with the body, so animal thought  
with all its whimper and giggle must perish therewith,  
with all shames, all vain ostentation and ugliness,  
and all personality of all other ideas;  
except it be that, like as in unconscient things  
whence conscience came, ther is also thru'out conscient life  
the same emergent evolution, persisting 1260  
in our spiritual life to the goal of conscience.

This mind perisheth with this body, unless  
the personal co-ordination of its ideas  
hav won to Being higher than animal life,  
at thatt point where the Ring cometh upward to reach  
the original creativ Energy which is God,  
with conscience entering into life everlasting.

'Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun



## *The Testament of Beauty*

squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood  
his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 1270  
and all the towers and temples and mansions of men  
face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp  
naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes  
'tis given, ifso they close not of fatigue, nor strain  
at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon  
to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch  
where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space  
Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul  
in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280  
walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,  
discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams  
that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when  
the small bats, issued from their hangings, flitter o'erhead  
thru' the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro  
hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;  
for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed  
may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright  
pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290  
with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake  
methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream methought  
I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one  
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell  
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances  
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;  
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,  
and I remember wondring the while I told it  
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem  
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300  
as once when she took thought to adjust theology,  
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man  
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids

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wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,  
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words  
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end  
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on  
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.

Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310  
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,  
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me  
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

For not the Muse herself can tell of Goddess love;  
which cometh to the child from the Mother's embrace,  
an Idea spacious as the starry firmament's  
inescapable infinity of radiant gaze,  
that fadeth only as it outpasseth mortal sight:  
and this direct contact is 't with eternities,  
this springtide miracle of the soul's nativity 1320  
that oft hath set philosophers adrift in dream;  
which thing Christ taught, when he set up a little child  
to teach his first Apostles and to accuse their pride,  
saying, *Unless ye shall receive it as a child,*  
*ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

So thru'out all his young mental apprenticeship  
the child of very simplicity, and in the grace  
and beauteous attitude of infantine wonder,  
is apt to absorb Ideas in primal purity,  
and by the assimilation of that immortal food 1330  
may build immortal life; but ever with the growth  
of understanding, as the sensible images  
are more and more corrupt, troubled by questioning thought,  
or with vainglory alloy'd, 'tis like enough the boy  
in prospect of his manhood wil hav cast to th' winds  
his Baptism with his Babyhood; nor might he escape  
the fall of Ev'ryman, did not a second call

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of nature's Love await him to confirm his Faith  
or to revoke him if he is wholly lapsed therefrom.

And so mighty is this second vision, which cometh 1340  
in puberty of body and adolescence of mind  
that, forgetting his Mother, he calleth it "first Love";  
for it mocketh at suasion or stubbornness of heart,  
as the ocean-tide of the omnipotent Pleasur of God,  
flushing all avenues of life, and unawares  
by thousandfold approach forestalling its full flood  
with divination of the secret contacts of Love,—  
of faintest ecstasies aslumber in Nature's calm,  
like thought in a closed book, where some poet long since  
sang his throbbing passion to immortal sleep—with coy 1350  
tendernesses delicat as the shifting hues  
that sanctify the silent dawn with wonder-gleams,  
whose evanescence is the seal of their glory,  
consumed in self-becoming of eternity;  
til every moment as it flyeth, cryeth "Seize!

Seize me ere I die! I am the Life of Life."

'Tis thus by near approach to an eternal presence  
man's heart with divine furor kindled and possess'd  
falleth in blind surrender; and finding therewithal  
in fullest devotion the full reconciliation 1360  
betwixt his animal and spiritual desires,  
such welcome hour of bliss standeth for certain pledge  
of happiness perdurable: and could he sustain  
this great enthusiasm, then the unbounded promise  
would keep fulfilment; since the marriage of true minds  
is thatt once fabled garden, amidst of which was set  
the single Tree that bore such med'cinable fruit  
that if man ate thereof he should liv for ever.

Friendship is in loving rather than in being lov'd,  
which is its mutual benediction and recompense; 1370  
and tho' this be, and tho' love is from lovers learn'd,  
it springeth none the less from the old essence of self.

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No friendless man ('twas well said) can be truly himself;  
what a man looketh for in his friend and findeth,  
and loving self best, loveth better than himself,  
is his own better self, his live lovable idea,  
flowering by expansion in the loves of his life.

And in the nobility of our earthly friendships  
we hav all grades of attainment, and the best may claim  
perfection of kind; and so, since ther be many bonds 1380  
other than breed (friendships of lesser motiv, found  
even in the brutes) and since our politick is based  
on actual association of living men, 'twil come  
that the spiritual idea of Friendship, the huge  
vastidity of its essence, is fritter'd away  
in observation of the usual habits of men;  
as happ'd with the great moralist, where his book saith  
that ther can be no friendship betwixt God and man  
because of their unlimited disparity.

From this dilemma of pagan thought, this poison of faith,  
Man-soul made glad escape in the worship of Christ; 1391  
for his humanity is God's Personality,  
and communion with him is the life of the soul.

Of which living ideas (when in the struggle of thought  
harden'd by language they became symbols of faith)  
Reason builded her maze, wherefrom none should escape,  
wandering intent to map and learn her tortuous clews,  
chanting their clerkly creed to the high-echoing stones  
of their hand-fashion'd temple: but the Wind of heav'n  
bloweth where it listeth, and Christ yet walketh the earth,  
and talketh still as with those two disciples once 1401  
on the road to Emmaus—where they walk and are sad;  
whose vision of him then was his victory over death,  
thatt resurrection which all his lovers should share,  
who in loving him had learn'd the Ethick of happiness;  
whereby they too should come where he was ascended  
to reign over men's hearts in the Kingdom of God.

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Our happiest earthly comradeships hold a foretaste  
of the feast of salvation and by thatt virtue in them  
provoke desire beyond them to out-reach and surmount 1410  
their humanity in some superhumanity  
and ultimat perfection: which, howe'er 'tis found  
or strangely imagin'd, answereth to the need of each  
and pulleth him instinctivly as to a final cause.  
Thus unto all who hav found their high ideal in Christ,  
Christ is to them the essence discern'd or undiscern'd  
of all their human friendships; and each lover of him  
and of his beauty must be as a bud on the Vine  
and hav participation in him; for Goddes love  
is unescapable as nature's environment, 1420  
which if a man ignore or think to thrust it off  
he is the ill-natured fool that runneth blindly on death.

This Individualism is man's true Socialism.  
This is the rife Idea whose spiritual beauty  
multiplieth in communion to transcendant might.  
This is thatt excelent way whereon if we wil walk  
all things shall be added unto us—thatt Love which inspired  
the wayward Visionary in his dóctrinal ode  
to the three christian Graces, the Church's first hymn  
and only deathless athanasian creed,—the which 1430  
“except a man believe he cannot be savèd”.

This is the endearing bond whereby Christ's company  
yet holdeth together on the truth of his promise  
that he spake of his great pity and trust in man's love,  
*Lo, I am with you always ev'n to the end of the world.*

Truly the Soul returneth the body's loving  
where it hath won it . . . and God so loveth the world . . .  
and in the fellowship of the friendship of Christ  
God is seen as the very self-essence of love,  
Creator and mover of all as activ Lover of all, 1440  
self-express'd in not-self, without which no self were.  
In thought whereof is neither beginning nor end

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nor space nor time; nor any fault nor gap therein  
'twixt self and not-self, mind and body, mother and child,  
'twixt lover and loved, God and man: but ONE ETERNAL  
in the love of Beauty and in the selfhood of Love.

FINIS

## *Publisher's Note on The Text* of THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

THE slight approach to a simplified spelling in this book is copied from the author's MS., which the printer was instructed to follow. The simplification, as will be seen, is mainly confined to two particulars, namely the final e and the doubled consonant. Since this e is invariably mute he would reserve it to distinguish heavy from light syllables: thus hav, not have, and liv distinguished from live; and all the -ate, -ile, -ive, and -ite words can have their speech-values shown, as steril and puerile; and thus ther is no confusion there.

And so the doubled consonant, which following the short vowel denotes its accentuation, is retained for that purpose: and this allows the useful distinction of the demonstrative pronoun thatt, from the other thats which have no proper accented vowel.

Inconsistencies (except for possible oversights such as shear for sheer in IV. 241 and ethick for ethic in IV. 353) are intentional, any rule being stayed at that point where it would needlessly distract the reader: thus nature appears in two spellings, of which the explanation is that the final syllable (whether the word be pronounced as may be indicated by the spelling nāt<sup>h</sup>ur, or by nacher as recognized by our Southern-English authorities) is always light and unaccented; but since the syllable tur has an uncertain value and is very offensive to the eye, the common full spelling ture is always maintained, except in those places where it suffers liquid synalæpha in the prosody, where the omission of the e guides the eye to the easy reading of the rhythm: and the author would explain that the use of -eth for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

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